TRUE WEST

47305
August, 1975
75¢

THE EARPS IN TONOPAH

MOLLIE THUMM – AN HONEST GOLD DIGGER

LEGENDARY TOM THREEPERSONS

— top rider, top lawman

OUTWITTING THE DALTONS

THE SAGA OF JOHN MOSS

— He said life was like hanging over a precipice by a cotton string!

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Frontier Times
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...N THE WEST!

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"Courtin'"
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CHOOSE FROM SELECTIONS BELOW. LIST NUMBERS ON A SHEET OF PAPER.

PICTURE SIZE IS WIDTH BY DEPTH

1—Ambushed, 11x14
2—A Tight Dally & Loose Latigo, 13½x9½
3—A Loose Cinch, 11x8
4—A Wounded Grizzly, 8½x11
5—Buffalo Hunt (spears), 11x7½
6—Boss of the Trail Herd, 8x10½
7—Bronc to Breakfast, 15x8½
8—Blackfeet Burning Crow Buffalo Range, 11½x8
9—Bucking Bronco, 8x11½
10—Better Than Bacon, 11x8½
11—On the Move, 13½x9½
12—Buffalo Hunt (arrows), 12½x8½
13—On the Trail, 11x7½
14—The Pony Raid, 10½x8
15—At Close Quarters, 11x8½
16—Capturing the Grizzly, 15x8½
17—Cinch Ring, 15x8½
18—Caught with the Goods, 14x9½
19—Cowboy Life, 10x14
20—Call of the Law, 13½x9½
21—Carson's Men, 14x9½
22—Return of the Warriors, 13½x9½
23—Piegan Indian, 9x12
24—Renegades Return, 16x11½
25—Chief Joseph, 8x11
26—Deadline on the Range, 14x9½
27—Disputed Trail, 11x14
28—Dangerous Cripple, 14x9½
29—In The Wake of The Buffalo Runners, 10x8
30—Early American, 13½x9½
31—Elk in Lake McDonald, 11x8½
32—First Furrow, 8x12
33—First Wagon Tracks, 15x8½
34—Finding the Trail, 13½x9½
35—Heads or Tails, 15x8½
36—Heading the Right Way, 13½x9½
37—The Cattle Drive, 13½x9½
38—Women of the Plains, 8x6
39—Invocation To The Sun, 13½x9½
40—Indian Love Call, 13½x9½
41—Jerked Down, 15x8½
42—The Jerkline, 14x9½
43—Loops & Swift Horses Are Surer Than Lead, 10½x7
44—Last of the Herd, 15x8½
45—Last Chance or Bust, 12½x9
46—Mad Cow, 12x8
47—Wagons Westward, 13½x9½
48—The Challenge, 10½x6½
49—When Arrows Spell Death, 9x7
50—Old Fashioned Stage Coach, 10x7
51—At the End of the Rope, 10½x7
52—Prospectors, 10½x8
53—Planning the Attack, 14x10
54—Pipe of Peace, 14x7
55—Who Killed the Bear?, 10½x7
56—Queen's War Hounds, 14x9½
57—Rainy Morning in a Cow Camp, 11x8½
58—Roping a Grizzly, 11x8½
59—Red Man's Wireless, 14x7
60—Roping a Wolf, 11x8½
61—Smoking Them Out, 11x10
62—Scattering the Riders, 11½x8
63—Strenuous Life, 14x10
64—Sun Worshippers, 16x10½
65—Serious Predicament, 15x8½
66—Single Handed, 14x9½
67—Slick Ear, 14x11½
68—Smoke of a .45, 12x9
69—Sage Brush Sport, 13½x8½
70—Signal Fire, 11x14
71—When Red Man Talks War, 13½x9½
72—In Enemy Country, 13½x9½
73—The Medicine Man, 11x8½
74—Trail's End, 13½x9½
75—The Holdup, 13x8
76—The Bolter, 9½x13½
77—The Attack, 12x8
78—The Drifter, 10½x8
79—The Tenderfoot, 11x8
80—Two of a Kind Win, 13½x9½
81—Last of 5,000, 8x9½
82—When Tracks Spell Meat, 13½x9½
83—When the Nose of a Horse Beats the Eyes of a Man, 13½x9½
84—When Ignorance is Bliss, 11x14
85—Wild Horse Hunters (cowboys), 14x9
86—Wild Horse Hunters (Indians), 12½x8
87—Whose Meat?, 13½x9½
88—Wagon Boss, 16x9½
89—When Mules Wear Diamonds, 13½x9½
90—A Crow Chief, 7x9
91—Innocent Allies, 14x9½
92—Where Ignorance is Bliss, 10½x6 (Cartoon)
93—When Sioux & Blackfeet Meet, 15x8½
94—Warning Shadows, 10½x7
95—When Horse Flesh Comes High, 15x8½
96—Wound Up, 11x8½
97—The Scouts (Indians) 9½x7
98—Winter Packet, 15x7
99—Mourning Her Warrior Dead, 11x8½
100—When Horses Turn Back There's Danger Ahead, 14x9½
101—The Buffalo Hunt (1898), 13½x9½
102—Cowboy Sport, 13½x9½
103—A Desperate Stand, 13½x9½
104—Rider of the Rough String, 13½x9½
105—Prairie Express, 13½x9½
106—The Fire Boat, 10½x8
107—Our Warriors Return, 13½x9½
108—When Wagon Trails Were Dim, 13½x9½
109—In Without Knocking, 14x10
110—Critical Moment, 8x6
111—Land of Good Hunting, 10½x8
112—Meat's Not Meat Until It's In The Pan, 13½x9½

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BY HENRY JAMES

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✶✶✶✶

Other articles will cover a wide area of treasure activities both in the Continental U.S. and abroad. Don't miss it!

(See GOLD! back issues on page 52)

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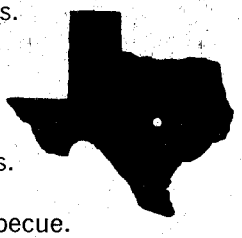

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A JOE SMALL PUBLICATION

July-August, 1975
Volume 22, No. 6
Whole No. 130

True West

All True—All Fact—Stories of The Real West!

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"The files of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES are going to be of great historica value and should be preserved in all the libraries of the country."——The lat Walter Prescott Webb, former President, American Historical Association.

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Cover: Joe Rader Roberts
"Courtin' "

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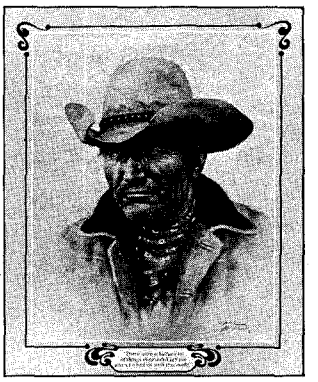
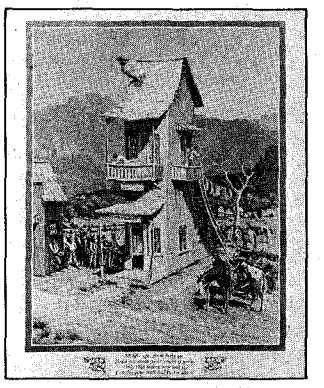
SKP510 - artist Bill Hampton
May your moccasins leave tracks
On many mounds of worth,
And walk with braves of every tribe
Who live in peace on earth.

SKP501 - artist Bill Hampton
May neither drouth nor rain nor blizzard
Disturb the joy-juice in your gizzard.
And may you camp where wind won't hit you,
Where snakes won't bite and bears won't git you!



SKP504 - artist Bill Hampton
"There were a helluva lot
of things they didn't tell me
when I hired on with this outfit."

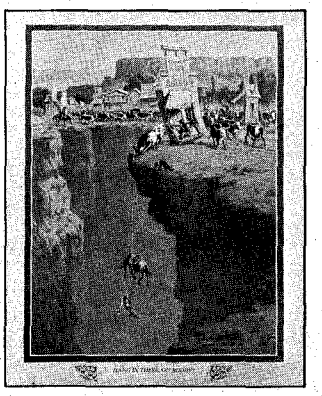


SKP516 - artist Lloyd Mitchell
Middle age, from forty on,
Need not mean your youth is gone;
Only that before you lose it,
You doggone well had better use it!

SKP505 - artist Bill Hampton
Stay happy my friend, hang easy and loose,
Gettin' rattlesnake riled is just no use.
So here is a slogan that's sure hard to match,
There ain't no use itchin' unless you can scratch!

SKP502 - artist Bill Hampton
May your horse never stumble, your spurs never rust,
Your guts never grumble and your cinch never bust!
May your boots never pinch, your crops never fail,
While you eat lots of beans and stay out of jail!

SKP503 - artist Bill Hampton
HANG TOUGH, PARDNER!



SKP515 - artist Lloyd Mitchell
HANG IN THERE, OL' BUDDY!

SKP509 - artist Bill Hampton
Nothing is so strong as gentleness,
Nothing so gentle as real strength.

SKP508 - artist Bill Hampton
"To have joy one must share it,
Happiness was born a twin."

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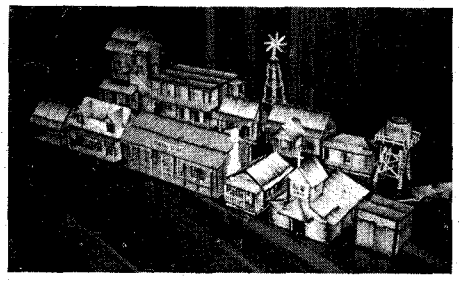
Truly Western

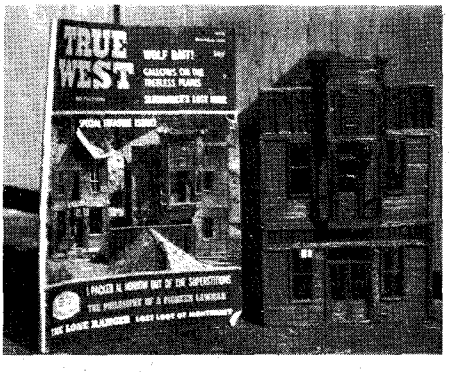
An Interesting Coincidence
Matchstick Miniatures

I am very fond of articles and pictures relating to old Western towns. Several months ago I decided to construct an entire town from matchsticks. I hope to complete this to put on display at our annual fair next fall. It is coming along very nicely at this time, although is far from being completed.

I'd like you to know that many of the ideas for the buildings have been taken from pictures in my old issues of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES. One model that I am especially pleased with was made from a picture on the December 1972 issue of TRUE WEST. I have enclosed a couple of photos of my town, including one of this model compared to the picture of the magazine cover. Just out of curiosity, where is or where was this old building actually located? Is it still standing?—Gene Redden, P. O. Box 252, West Monroe, Louisiana 71291



A tip of the hat to Mr. Redden on his ambitious (and obviously successful) project!



Mr. Redden's town.

The Real
Elkhorn, Montana

Two thousand dollars is needed by July 1, 1975 to pay off a loan for two buildings at Elkhorn, Montana from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The two buildings are Gullian Hall, and Fraternal Hall, two of the most photographed buildings in the West.

These building were obtained by the Western Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society headquartered in Missoula in 1972 for the purpose of preserving them from eventual removal from the state.

Fraternal Hall, the best known building, was built in 1893 and is in reasonably good shape. The stage is still intact and a new roof was put on in October 1973 by the Western Montana Ghost Town Preservation Society. It could be refurbished without too much *difficulty* but at a great *expense.*

Donations of any amount will be appreciated and can be sent to the First Boulder Valley Bank in Boulder, Montana. For further information on this project please contact—W.M.G.T.P.S., Box 2245, Missoula, Montana 59801

The Walter Jackson Story

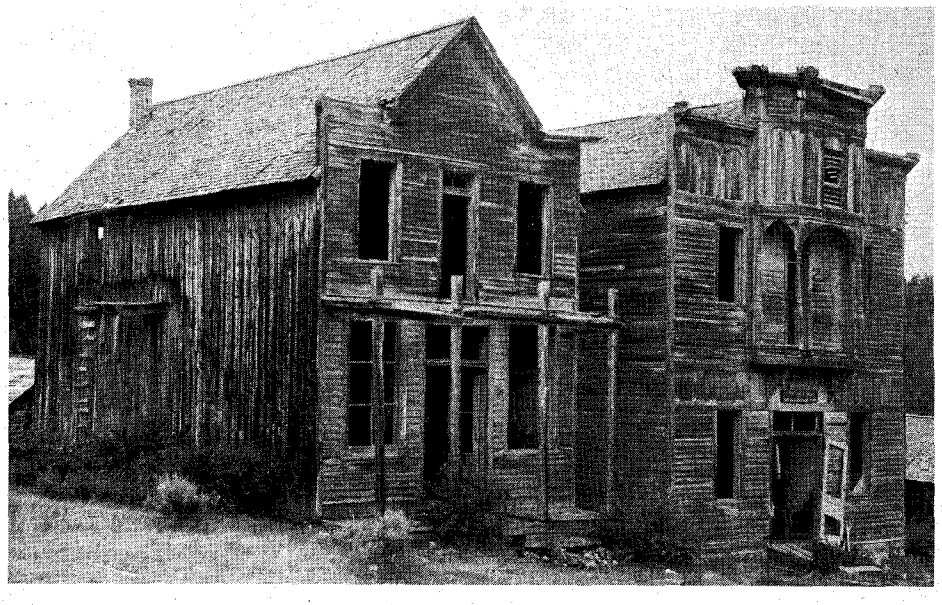
I have just finished reading "Great Falls' First Black Cowboy" and I sure did enjoy it. I have been a reader of your great magazine for a long time and wondered why there has been so little written about our men and the part they played in settling our country. I hope I'll get to read more.

I'm not quite as old as some in your stories, but not young either. I like all of the articles—they are all good, and I love to read TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES, even the old ones.—Mrs. Elnora Pollard, 1713 N S. Freeway, Fort Worth, Texas 76102

The December Prospector Cover

When I looked at that beautiful—and I do mean beautiful—color reproduction of the old prospector panning gold, on the December '74 TRUE WEST, I could hardly believe that two days before, my son, here on a five-day visit from Las Cruces, and I were being given personal instructions in panning for gold by Ed Orbom. Ed is not as old or as dedicated as your pictured Earl Faulkner, but is a most interesting friend who can tell

Old Gullian Hall (left) and Fraternal Hall in Elkhorn, Montana.



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Ed Orbom of Alpine, California instructs David Smith of Las Cruces, New Mexico in the traditional art of panning for gold.

many an exciting account of his mining experiences.

Neither my son David nor I had ever actually seen or been around to see gold panned before. In his demonstration, Ed ground up some ore samples known to hold a trace of gold and we were able to see the fine particles in the crease of the skillet, which, by the way, was also new to us. I thought gold was always panned from a regular gold pan. The skillet is really more practical; it is also used for cooking and cuts the weight of a pack.

This occurred on the last day of David's visit, and then just two days later, having that cover show up was just too much! This sort of coincidence happens more and more frequently—or am I just tuned in on the same wave lengths as your magazines?— Wendell E. Smith, 1635 Alpine Terrace Rd., Alpine, California 92001

"Pig" Ansley

In 1958, while still in the Air Force, I had the good fortune to be reassigned from Moody AFB, Georgia to Amarillo AFB on the windy great plains just east of Amarillo, Texas. This reassignment was received with great delight as I was an early Americana and early West buff, and this would give me a great opportunity to visit many of the places read about in magazines such as *True West*.

Shortly after my arrival, I wanted to dispose of a Civil War Sharps rifle, and an ad in the local paper brought an immediate response from a keen-eyed trader who negotiated the price down from the asked $55 to $50, or he would trade $75 worth of mounted horns from an original Texas Longhorn. This was my introduction to Paul "Pig" Ansley, who remains as one of the truly outstanding persons of the many people met in my years of searching out early West facts and artifacts. Pig was fascinating, as he had an immense store of knowledge on Texas history, and had talked to many of the participants or those close to the makers of Texas history.

He related to me the time he was one of the men who had talked to a very old Indian in 1929 or 1930 about the Mackenzie raid in Palo Duro Canyon where the objective was to bring the Indians back to the reservation and the strategy was to destroy the horses of the Indians, thereby depriving them of their ability to conduct raids or even obtain food. This particular Indian was a young man at the time Mackenzie swooped down in the canyon, and years later he was showing the way it happened at the actual scene of the engagement. He was afraid and took refuge behind a large rock in the canyon, and since he planned a hasty retreat from the scene, decided to rid himself of the added weight of some arrowheads and belongings. These he buried. When relating the story these many years later, he went over to where he had hidden from the troopers, brushed away the dirt, there exposed the cache.

Pig also knew Billy Dixon's widow, wife of the man who turned the battle of Adobe Walls from defeat to victory with one shot from his buffalo rifle. Pig studied every facet of the engagement, and went to the location and carefully measured the distances involved, to verify historical data that is frequently a combination of fact and imagination. Pig said the shot that killed the Indian chief was truly a splendid piece of shooting—and I believe him!

Pig knew the Indian lore and carefully researched the sites of ceremonial events. He had excavated a large number of ceremonial flints that were a tribute to Indian craftsmanship, and an equal tribute to Pig's ability to apply his vast knowledge in locating the scene of these ceremonies. I often asked if he would take me along in search of these precious objects, but it was a secret he took with him. He did say that the points, from 10 to 15 inches in length, were always arranged in a circle pointing toward the fire.

Although I had not seen Pig Ansley for thirteen years, he had remained a great friend of mine personally, and a friend of all lovers of Texas, and Texas history. It was therefore with great regret that I saw a small advertisement in a recent issue of the *Shotgun News* soliciting bids on the collection of Western Americana from the collection of the "late Pig Ansley."

I did not answer the ad, as I could not bear to see how high a Civil War Sharps could climb. Pig was a *real* trader, you know!—John J. Ley, 5102 Lancelot Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78218

The Old Rio Grande

I have been reading TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES since 1954, and they are my favorite Western magazines. I was born in 1903 twenty-five miles below Laredo, Texas in a mining camp right close to the Rio Grande. We could hear the water running during the night. On the other side of the Rio Grande is a Mexican village called Colombia, where my father worked in a coal tipple—as a matter of fact, he died in 1913 of what is now called miners' black lung. We lived in Webb County, Texas when the Mexican revolution broke out in 1910. I saw Texas Rangers patrolling along the Rio Grande, which was a real thrill for me. They always wore a .45 on each hip. Later the government sent a detachment of about 300 soldiers to guard the Rio Grande. They camped close to our mining camp. They used to play baseball with the local Mexican team on Sundays. The Mexican army and the revolutionaries had many battles for possession of Colombia, which is the reason the American soldiers were sent there to guard the river. They used to take their horses every morning and evening to water them.

I have been a miner all my life. In 1935 I moved to the state of West Virginia and I have been here with my wife in a place called Omar. I am retired. The coal company store here sells TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES.—Ralph Santos, Box 426, Omar, West Virginia 25638

Fox and Geese

I was interested in Mr. Pfalser's letter in the August issue. The April '74 issue also recalled to me the game of Fox and Geese—and yes, it is still played! I began teaching in a one-room country school when I was eighteen. It was in snow country, and Fox and Geese was a common game. Since then, I have taught in many areas of southern Idaho, and the children, especially younger ones, still play the game.

There are still a few one-room schools throughout the mountain West. Since there are fewer children than in larger schools, simple games of earlier days are still enjoyed. Even in the rather large school where I taught for a number of years, until retiring last year, the children played Fox and Geese as soon as snow came. There was never very much snow and it didn't last long, so they took advantage of it while they could.—Lee Albin, 1706 N. 7th St., Boise, Idaho 83702

Elwood, Texas Cemetery

In the September-October issue of TRUE WEST, I read with interest the article, "Elwood, Texas Has Gone to Grass." Many of my ancestors are buried in that old Elwood, Texas Cemetery. Four of us went to the cemetery and found that it was quite rundown, so we are trying to raise the money needed to fence it.—Mike Grissom, 508 East Cherokee, Wynnewood, Oklahoma 73098

Hood River Blackie

Don't mourn the passing of the Old West—it isn't dead yet! Last January my wife and I were on vacation in Arizona and parked our camper in a lonely stretch of desert about five miles north of the Mexican border. We were rock hunting the second afternoon we were there when we saw a man riding our way on a mule and leading a burro loaded with camp gear. He started to ride around us but I hailed him and he rode over and stopped about twenty feet away.

Such a strange man and strange outfit

(Continued on page 20)

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I ASKED FOR IT— I GOT IT!

"I've got them all—here's a picture of me and a few."—Kenneth Dorman, Oakland, Oregon.

DID YOU ever see a zinc washtub full of letters? If not, I can show you one that is humped in the middle. You can throw another letter on it anywhere and the letter will slide off! Also, I can show you another tub that is filling fast!

Years ago, Elizabeth (the gal I live with) and I would go by the post office and pick up the mail. In the early years, I could stick it in a hip pocket. Then we took along sacks, boxes, and finally one day we forgot to take along a container and just happened to have a big zinc tub in the car. I think we were going to use it to pick up some cow fertilizer for plants around the office. Anyhow, it was the only thing we had to hold the mail, and that day we got half a tub of letters. We were too happy to fool with manure. I think we even splurged and ate out that night. We ate good, too—it cost us $1.25 each. . . .

AT LAST I DID IT! I had an eye surgery for a cataract over a year ago. Complications set in and I had to go back to have some "bands" removed. Then the very famous Dr. Alice McPherson of Houston found a *hole* in my "good" eye. You folks have talked about my "crying editorials" for over twenty-two years now and I am going to have to own up to it finally. Looks like I flat cried a hole in my good eye and am just now getting over the "freezing" patch job on it. It takes a month to get over a deal like that so I think it has cured my crying!

While we are on the subject, let me thank those of you who have written in saying you are offering a little prayer for me every night. A person has to be in real trouble before he can realize just how much this means. Let me tell you for sure—SOMETHING has helped! The bad eye that had so very little chance of coming back is doing okay now and I can see pretty good out of it with a contact lens. The other eye has weathered the "patchwork" and I will have surgery on it in eight to ten months. If that works out all right, I will be in good shape again. In the meantime, the only thing that I can say in regard to your concern and encouragement is, "Thank you!" I never dreamed that *so many* good people like you had walked the same old road I was on. Maybe we ought to start a club!

NOW, off the ailment thing and on to some of your terrific letters. For *one time* in my life, I am going to try and give brief excerpts from some of them and try to make my comments even briefer or make none at all. Now you know that will be *hard* for me to do.

"I can't recall any old-timers ever referring to the 'frontier.' Like my grandfather and the others said, 'I went West.' One thing has intrigued me for years: WHAT really marked the closing of the frontier and the passing of the Old West? Was it something geographical? Some historian's version? A government edict? Was it just a change in thinking and state of mind? Like old soldiers, did it just fade away?"—Harvey R. Horton, Denver, Colorado.

Harvey, I don't know anyone who could give a cut and dried answer to that question. For one thing, the automobile, technology in general, and running out of a frontier when the Western movement hit the shores of the Pacific Ocean—perhaps that is as good an answer as any. The late Dr. Walter Prescott Webb explores this thoroughly in his book, *The Great Frontier*. You will especially enjoy Chapter 4.

While we are on the subject, have you ever noticed Dr. Webb's statement on our Contents Page, "The files of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES are going to be of great historical value and should be preserved in all the libraries of the country." He was the second man west of the Mississippi River to be president of the American Historical Association. But back to the letters:

"This is the truth, so help me! Julius Philips had an old-fashioned general store and post office on the highway between Oakley and Scott City, Kansas. In the summer of 1920 I pastured a bunch of cattle with Julius down on the Smokey Hill River about twenty miles below Russell Springs. One day I rode over to the store and found Julius drawing oil out of a barrel and putting it in quart fruit jars which he placed on a rack alongside the drum. I asked him why he went to all that trouble when it was so easy to use his measuring cans. 'Some people like a better grade of oil,' he said dryly."—Walter Gann, South Laguna, California.

It's like I've been trying to tell people for a long time, Walter—put wine in two bottles and put different labels on them and you will have people swearing that one wine is better than the other!

Norman Simmons of San Francisco, California and at least 700 more mentioned something to the effect of get "True" and "West" on the cover somewhere. Gene Lamoreux of Muscatine, Iowa, writes: "Use the expression 'True West's Kissin' Cousin' under your FRONTIER TIMES title. Whatever you do, don't kill *any* of your titles. I have read every magazine in the field. Most of them have so many errors, misprints and reruns or rewrites that I now avoid them like the plague."

Well, Gene, from time to time we slip up, too, but we sure *try* not to. Like old Fred Gipson used to say—the best biscuit maker in the world is liable to put out a batch now and then that stoops to rise and then bakes on the squat!

There are over 400 letters that I have in a separate stack that I haven't had a chance to read yet, but already the vote has been so overwhelming about getting "True West" somewhere on the cover that we have started doing it. If you are not a subscriber, pick up a copy of July FRONTIER TIMES and read "VIA—And Much Obliged!" The letters in it alone, I think, are worth the price. Also, note what we have done to the title.

"PLEASE do reprint the rare old books. It is the only way that most of us can afford them and I would like to see this done even if you have to go as much as three or four installments.

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I'd also like to see the old issues of TRUE WEST reprinted. I would like to collect a set for myself as well as separate sets for my children. This is history you will not get anywhere else."—Lynneal Pace, Santa Maria, California.

We will start reprinting the rare old books as soon as possible, Lynneal. The vote has been 100% on this and everybody says about the same thing—"It is the only way we'll ever get to read them." I know what you mean—who can fork over $15, $50, $100, and yes, even $150, for the *real* rare ones? I know I can't. As many point out, these reprints will be worth *many* times the price of the entire magazine to people who are not rare book "collectors" but who want to read them just for the contents.

"To the person who started with the first issue of TRUE WEST, I been filing them all these years, reprints of 'hard-to-get' issues favors the 'johnny-come-late,' and makes a goat out of the old standbys. I hope you go broke."—Don Anderson, Long Beach, California.

Don, if you have a complete file of all three magazines, go back about ten years and note the controversy over republishing some of the early TRUE WEST issues in the first editions of OLD WEST. It was thrashed out *completely* then. NO REPRINT IS AN *ORIGINAL!* If you want to find out the hard way, reprint an old $100 book and try to get that amount for each copy! You wouldn't have a chance. The words might read the same, but there's no way to get the same paper stock, the same color of ink, etc. Look at one of your early issues—it's taken over twenty years of temperature changes and even chemical changes to give it that look. This question has come up countless times in connection with various book publishers, magazine publishers, and every other type of publishing venture and the answer has always been the same—a facsimile is *not* the real thing. What would an imitation of the Hope diamond be worth? We are not going to reprint any first editions of TRUE WEST or any other of our publications in any existing magazine. We would do it under a new title so that those people who have the old issue wouldn't be forced to buy a duplication of what they already have. Those who do not own the copies put out in the 1950s (and there are many) could buy them off the newsstands or subscribe if they wish. This would hurt *nobody.*

"Keep up the quality of your magazines even if you have to double the price. Most of the trash on the newsstands is not worth reading even were it free." H. L. Bennett, Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Don't worry—we're determined to make it without a center-fold or four-letter words!

"I will loan my FRONTIER TIMES out but never a TRUE WEST!"—L. Perry Way, Zionsville, Indiana.

"I don't care if you call them 'Dry Cow Chips Monthly'—it's what is in your magazines that counts. Keep them coming!"—Rosella Marshall, Mountainair, New Mexico.

"You've got them mis-matched. TRUE WEST and OLD WEST would make a perfect pair."—William Clason, Davis, California.

"Publish TRUE WEST monthly. It states directly its reason for existing. Other titles in the field are too indefinite."—Paul Seeger, Kenosha, Wisconsin.

I GIVE UP! Even short extracts from the letters above do not make a dent in the wonderful number of letters. I can still throw a postcard on that first tub and it slides off!

To summarize briefly, "frontier" means many things to many people, such as: fiction, coonskin caps, the East, no connection with the West, antiques—that last one throws me! Also, "I think the average person expects to find cheap cowboy stories and ranch romances under the FRONTIER TIMES title. I think of all your publications as TRUE WEST!"—Dianne Neumann, Downey, California.

Most of you tell us to keep that "Truth Wagon" on the cover since it is a guide to your Western Americana reading. And you ask what you can do to help. That's easy—ask for FRONTIER TIMES, TRUE WEST, OLD WEST and GOLD! at any place where you do not find them on the newsstands. Sometimes it takes notes to the wholesaler to bring forth results. In short, you write a note saying that you miss these titles, then give the

(Continued on page 43)

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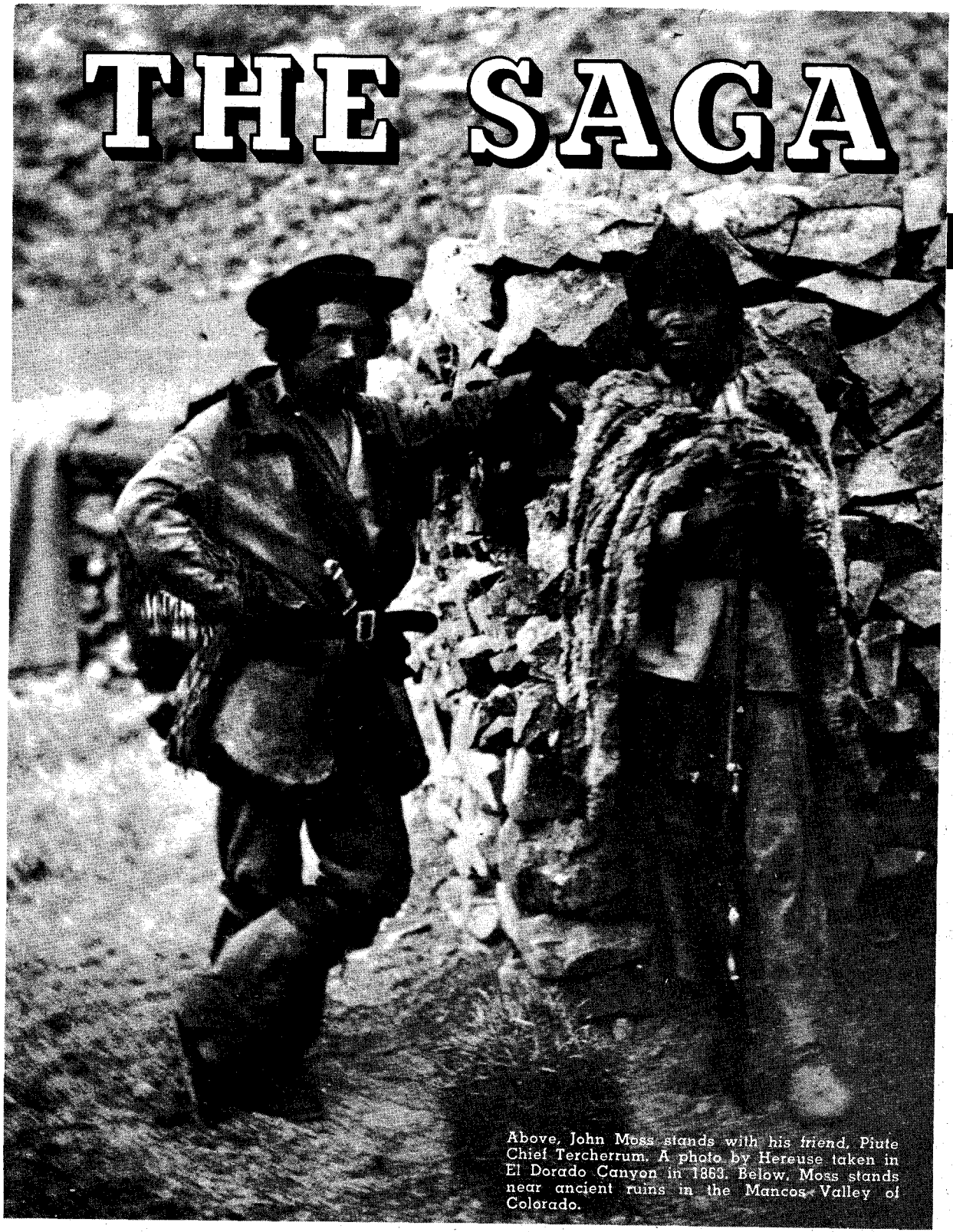
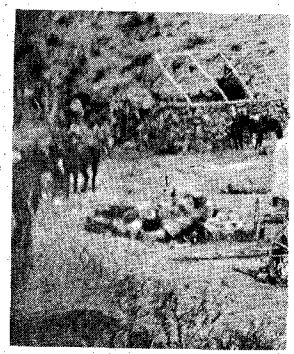
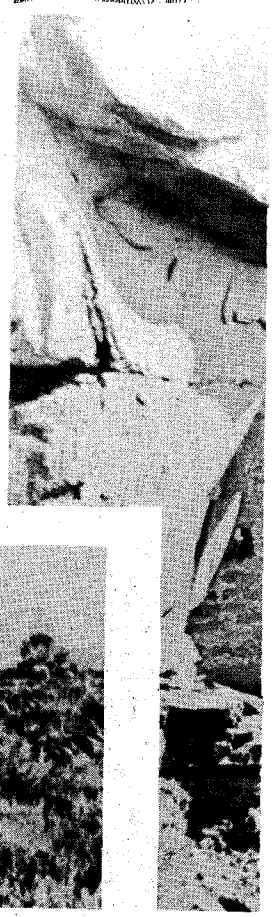
THE SAGA OF

— whose life,

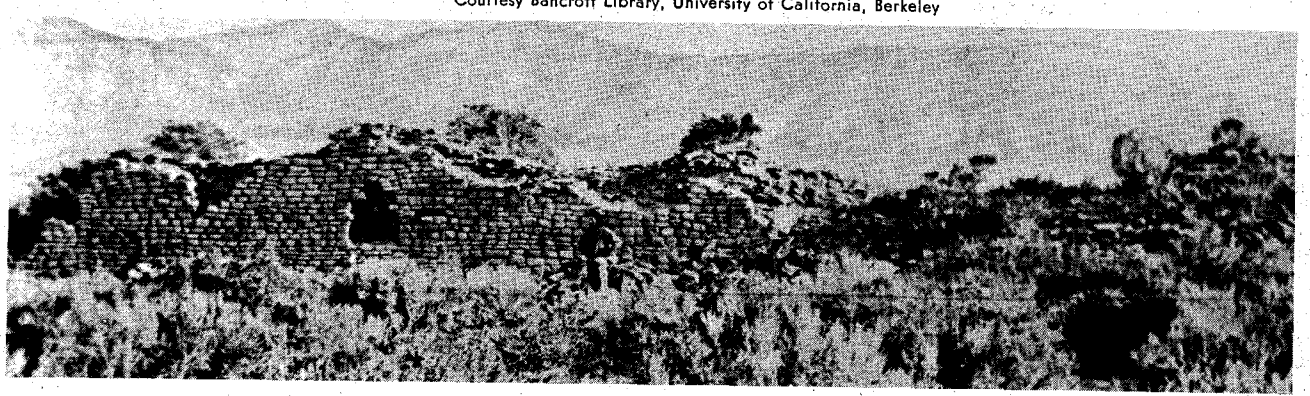






Above, John Moss stands with his friend, Piute Chief Tercherrum. A photo by Hereuse taken in El Dorado Canyon in 1863. Below, Moss stands near ancient ruins in the Mancos Valley of Colorado.

Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley



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JOHN MOSS

as he once described it, was "like hanging over a precipice by a cotton string"

Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Above, one of the mining camps in El Dorado Canyon in 1863. Photo taken by R. D. Hereuse, a member of Professor William H. Brewer's exploring expedition. Some of Brewer's men are lined up in front of the tent. Below, John Moss leans against the side of one of the more interesting ruins in Mancos Canyon, known as the "Two-Story House."

By WILLIAM B. SECREST
Photos Courtesy Author

FOR over twenty years a man roamed the great Southwest as prospector, Indian agent, explorer and guide, a man whose exploits are virtually unknown. "Narraguinep" the Indians called him, meaning "Lives Forever" or "Never Die." He was John Moss, and when he did die at an early age he left behind a legend that fully lived up to his Indian name.

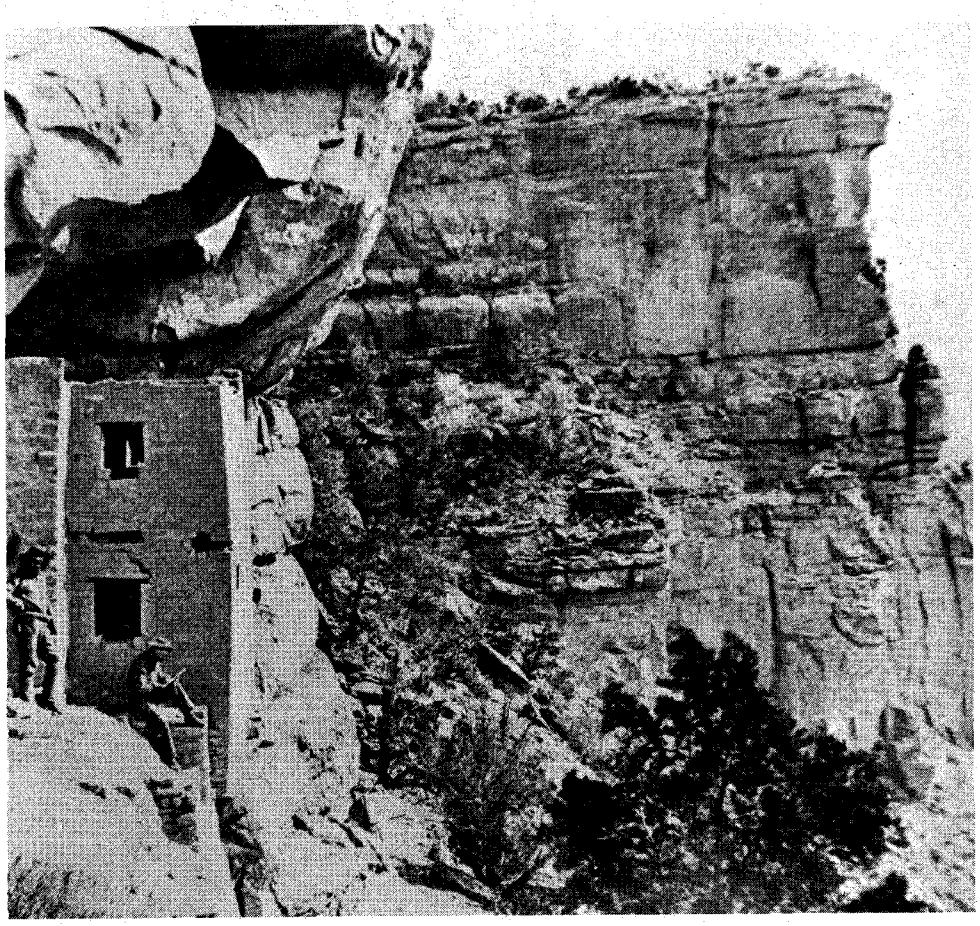
Strange tales clustered about him, bolstered by stories he himself told: He had wandered to California in 1840 and had been rescued, starving, by the Indians; he was a Mormon Danite who lived among the wildest Indians as their chief; he was the legendary white man who had led the Piutes at the infamous Mountain Meadows massacre in Utah.

He had done all of this or none—for he evidently was inconsistent in giving the date of his birth—as evidenced by his obituaries.

A strange man of the deserts and mountains, Moss was equally at home in an Indian wickiup or a hotel in San Francisco. He was a living link between civilization and savagery and his story is one of the lesser known sagas of our Western frontier history.

John Thomas Moss grew up in Utica, New York, where he had been born on March 4, 1839. He was bright, inquisitive, and hungry for adventure, even as a boy. He ran away to sea at thirteen, but his father was waiting for him when his ship returned to port. Two years later, when the family moved to frontier Iowa, young John and his six brothers and sisters helped build the family's rough log cabin on Beaver Creek. Nathaniel Moss, the father, was a tailor and postmaster of Mitchell County, and later a long-term justice of the peace. He farmed, operated a general store and was prominent in Masonic and Democratic Party circles. The local school district was named Mossville in his honor.

During the winter of 1856-57, a band of Winnebago Indians camped near the Moss home. Young John visited the camp and was fascinated by their way of life. Soon he was spending every spare moment at the village and became particularly close to Chief White Deer, quickly learning the rudiments of Indian language and customs. His relationship with the Winnebagos stirred within the boy a desire to be moving on—to see the vast spaces of the country west of Iowa. In the fall of 1857, seventeen-year-old John Moss left home again with the great West as his destination.



LITTLE is known of the next few years of his life. In a letter written the following year he reported carrying the mail between Nebraska and Colorado, noting also that he was quite homesick. Late in 1859 he was working at Roberts Creek in Arizona Territory, still with the mail company.

In another letter John wrote of the dangerous frontier life he led. "A person living here has to stand everything, he is subject to attacks from the Indians, also assaults from some desperado, living here is like hanging over a precipice by a cotton string. . . ."

In the letter he told of a co-worker's being killed by Indians and his own growing relationship with the wild tribes of the Southwest. "I have got along well with the Indians," he wrote. "They

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profess a great deal of friendship for me, but I always keep my weather eye open. . . ."

For the next few years Moss lived from time to time with the Indians in Arizona. The basic customs and verbal and sign language learned among the Winnebagos now was to pay off, and he quickly earned the respect of the red men. Reportedly he was initiated into the secret societies of the Moqui and Zuni tribes, which furthered his growing insight into Indian character.

Moss enjoyed Indian life, but also yearned to travel and be among his own people. Fort Mojave, Arizona was established in April 1859 and Moss probably visited there early in 1860. The fort was located in the blistering desert country along the Colorado River. Moss quickly made friends among the assorted army officers, prospectors and Indians who frequented the place. Recognizing Moss' potential in dealing with the local red men, the commanding officer hired him an an interpreter and guide for the troops.

Moss himself stated that the first great adventure of his life took place in the summer of 1861 while he was a guide at Fort Mojave. Since the fort was abandoned in May of that year, he may have been referring to the previous summer, although the truth of his story has never been verified. Pauline Weaver, an old mountain man, had told Moss of seeing the mouth of the Little Colorado River, far to the east, up the Grand Canyon. Moss had doubted him and, taking Lieutenant Riley, three soldiers and two Indians with him, proceeded to Lee's Ferry, high above the canyon, where they built a raft. The Indians were supposed to accompany Moss on a voyage down the river, but when the soldiers headed back to the fort, the red men changed their minds. Told that the water was too high and the trip impossible, Moss was just mad enough to undertake the journey by himself. "I had provisions with me," he recalled later, "and a rifle and a pole, and I poled myself off from the bank in a dare-devil spirit."

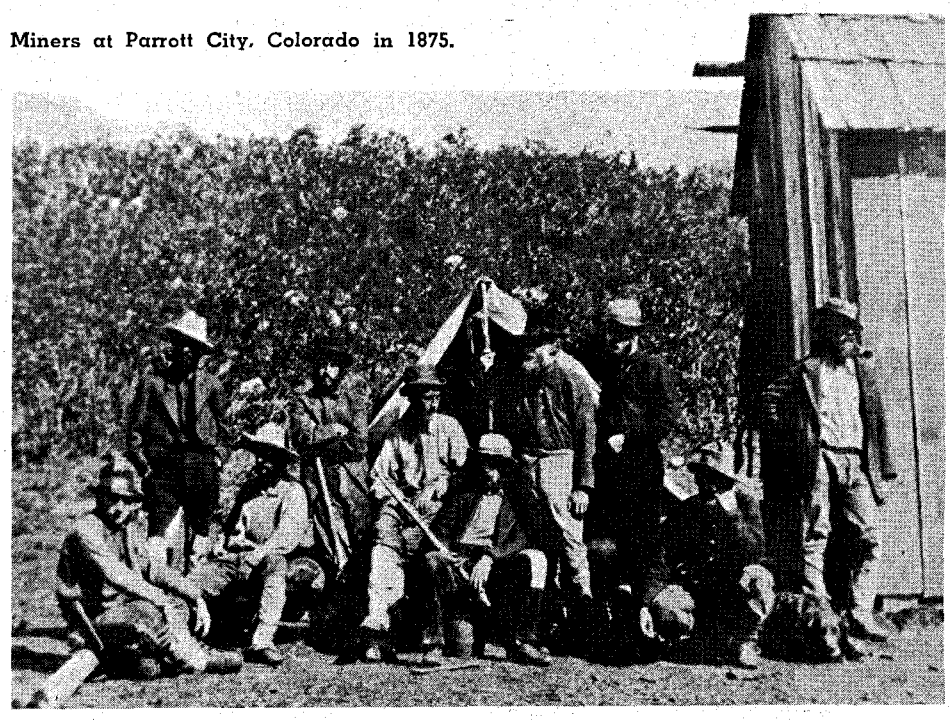
The dare-devil spirit soon turned to cold terror. It was a pleasant voyage for several hours, but then Moss found himself traveling faster than he bargained for. Soon the raft was being buffeted by rocks and he was drenched by a constant spray of water. By this time he was looking for a spot to land, but there was nothing but sheer canyon walls on both sides with just a thin crack of sky far above. It was an awe-inspiring sight, but Moss was busy clutching the raft for all he was worth, with little thought about the view. Except when directly overhead, the sun rarely penetrated the dark depths of the canyon and there was little difference in day and night.

"My provisions and gun had not been lashed to the raft, and in a very short time after the start all was lost in an eddy that spun me round and round and upset the unmanageable thing I was afloat on. The pole I had to guide the raft went with the rest, and nothing was left but the raft, and myself, drenched, shivering and dejected. Throughout the three days and a half I was without sleep, a coma of indifference stole over me, and it was quiet if not the repose of slumber, but every time the raft turned a somersault in a rapid, I clung to it with a desperation and tenacity indescribable, and although sometimes under water for half a minute, the planks would right again and I came to the surface to pick up my breath. The want of sleep did not knock me under much, for it is not the first time that I have been several days without a snooze or a crust, but from side to side of the precipices I was knocked terribly, getting bruises and being always in a tremor lest the raft and I should part company. It was the low condition of the river that saved me. . . ."

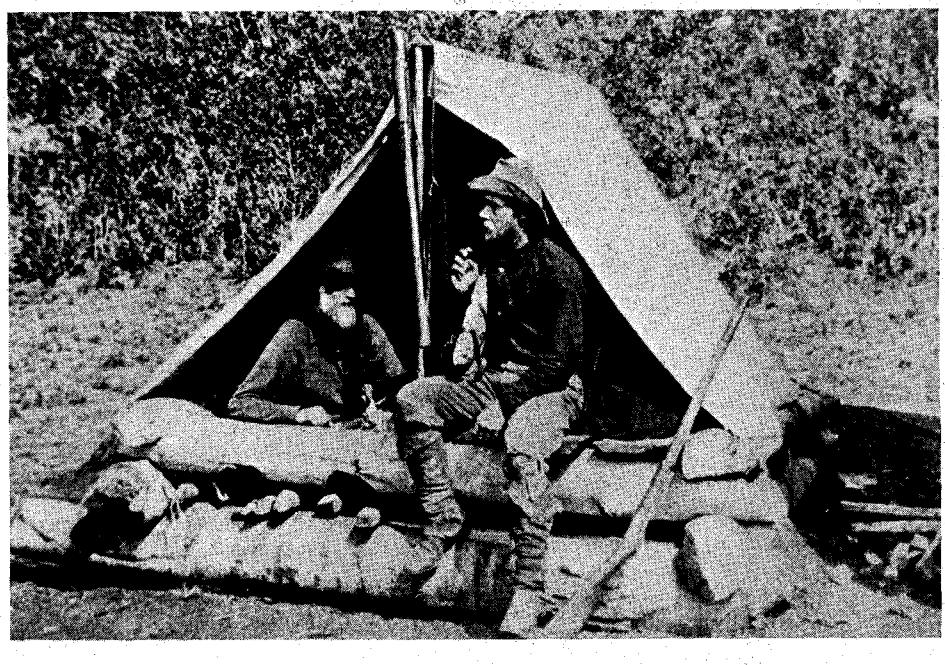
On the fourth day Moss was sighted by some Indians above Fort Mojave. There was barely enough raft left for him to stretch out on, and he was lying face down with only torn buckskin breeches left of his clothes. He was alive, but bruised and half-drowned. The Indians pulled the raft ashore and Moss was soon being tended. "Never shall I forget," he said, "the luxury of my first meat and hearty pull at a bowl of whiskey." Moss claimed to be first through the Grand Canyon, but his story has never been authenticated.

OFTEN coming into contact with prospectors in his travels, and by asking questions and watching carefully, Moss quickly became a knowledgeable miner

Miners at Parrott City, Colorado in 1875.



Prospectors at Parrott City. Rifles were kept handy to impress the always lurking Utes.



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John Moss at Parrott City at the time of W. H. Jackson's visit (1874-75).

himself. When the Civil War forced abandonment of Fort Mojave, he was without work and joined a prospecting expedition. The venture was financed by Californians, and Moss probably agreed to act as guide for equal shares.

They were prospecting in southern Nevada when Moss came across an Indian he had known along the Colorado River. Ireteba was a chief of the Mojaves, and usually friendly to prospectors and explorers. When the Indian showed Moss a rich chunk of ore he had picked up, the miners became quite excited. Ireteba led the party south to a place on the east bank of the Colorado called El Dorado Canyon. Prowling about the area, the men located rich veins of both gold and silver ore. After gathering enough samples and data to file their claim notices, several of them headed for Los Angeles to post letters and buy supplies.

In the fall of 1862 Nat Lewis, one of the group, brought back a party of investors from Los Angeles. It was a long journey through steaming desert country that culminated in the even more remote and desolate El Dorado Canyon. One of the travelers later recalled, "The population in and around Eldorado Canyon consisted at that time of about ten or twelve persons and they were all there when we drove in." The lonely prospectors cheered as this first wagon from the outside world drove into camp. There were no buildings in the settlement—just tents and rock and brush huts. That night there was a big celebration around a five-gallon keg of liquor and a large box of grapes.

"While here," wrote Lem McKeeby, "we met the principal character of this great-to-be mining camp, a man by the name of John Moss. He was a bright young man about twenty-five years old, medium size, light complexion. Had been in this vicinity some years and had great faith in the outcome of this mining section. He seemed to know every ledge and everybody, even the Indians, among whom, it was said, he had lived off and on. . . ."

Once his claims were in operation, Moss was again off prospecting the vast desert country. A writer in the San Francisco *Alta* in June of 1863 noted that he had recently met Moss, Frank Skinner, and Bill Francis at the newly re-activated Fort Mojave. "They were in fine spirits, having discovered a very rich mineral district, about eight miles in a northeasterly direction from the fort, which they called the San Francisco District."

While his partners began operations, Moss traveled to San Francisco for supplies and workmen for the Moss and Skinner Lodes. He was back late in July and when his mine was in operation, Moss himself was ready to start traveling again. He had brought young Ben Coit, son of one of his investors, back to Fort Mojave with him. The two planned to make a trip to Walker's diggings where the new town of Prescott was beginning to stir.

MOSS and Coit left Fort Mojave on August 2, and traveled south down the Colorado River. They met a Chimajueva chief who gave them the particulars of several murders committed recently by the Indians. The weather was blistering, and lonely graves were seen at several points. One day a hatless and ragged stranger came running into the Moss camp. His name was Baker and he told a grim story of the hazards of this wild country. He had traveled to a small gold camp named Antelope Springs with his partner, but shortly after their arrival the partner was killed in a brawl. Baker tried to assist his friend, but

Prospectors look for "color" along the Colorado River. Taken near Lee's Ferry, near the area where Moss began his self-proclaimed solo trip down Grand Canyon.

Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

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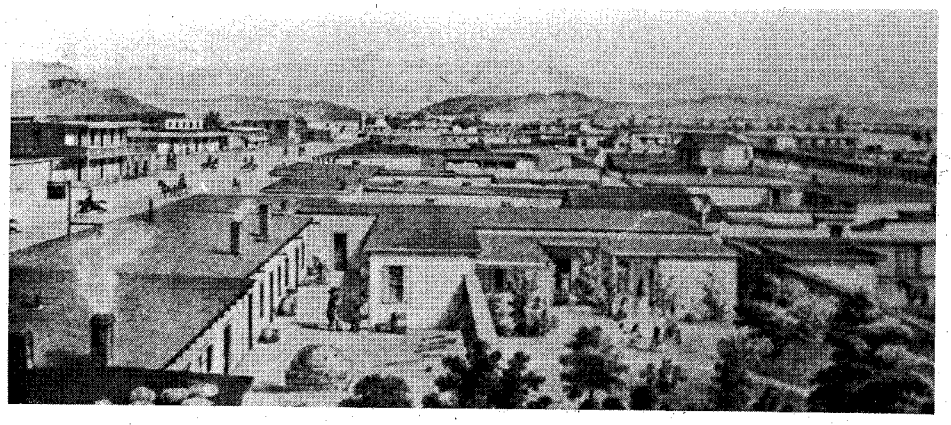


Moss frequently visited Los Angeles to buy supplies and record mining deeds. In the early 1860s the town still retained much of the flavor of the old Spanish days.

barely escaped from the camp with his own life. After that he wandered about for several days until he came upon a camp of Mexicans. They invited him to stop and eat, but he no sooner sat down than they pounced on him, stealing his revolver and everything in his pockets. When Baker stumbled across Moss and Coit, he had been over sixty hours without food.

Heading east up Bill Williams Fork, Moss and Coit passed several small mining camps and saw droves of wild game. They prospected along the way and found good gold and silver indications. Soon they were on Lynx Creek where the famous mountain man, Joe Walker, and some 150 Americans were busy working the placers for gold. Nearby was the staked-off future site of Prescott, Arizona. There were no Mexicans or Chinese in the area, since rules of the new mining district did not allow foreigners to enter for six months. The mining was good, but supplies were scarce and very costly.

Their packs filled with ore samples, Moss and Coit returned to Fort Mojave by a new and direct route. They arrived on September 2, and Moss immediately began preparations for a return trip.

According to Captain Knight, the *Alta* correspondent at Fort Mojave, "The sight of the nuggets of pure *oro* which the party brought back with them so dazzled the eyes of your correspondent that it is more than likely he will make up one of the prospecting party."

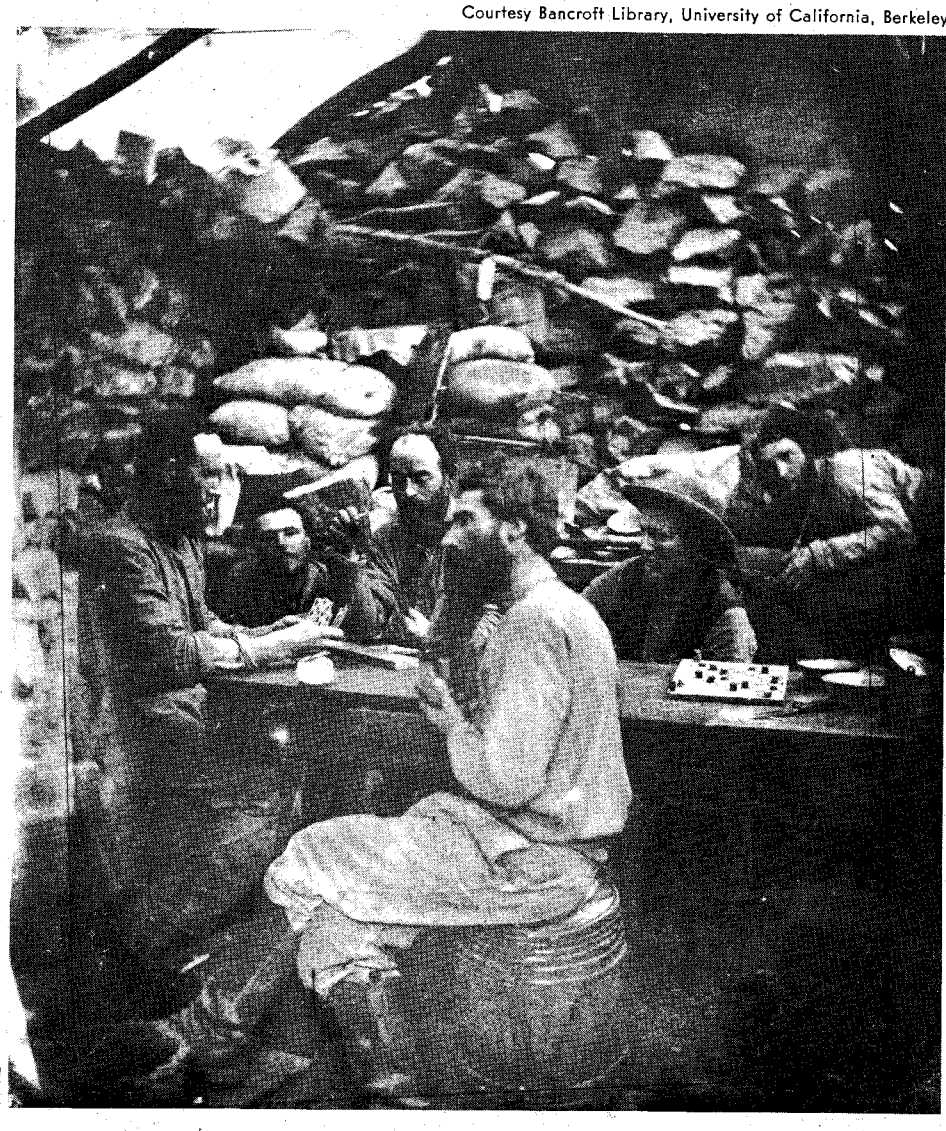
As it turned out, Knight did accompany Moss and his party back to Lynx Creek, but along the way the newspaperman became lost. Like Baker, whom Moss had previously rescued, Knight wandered the desert country for some time before finally stumbling into Walker's diggings. He was glad to be escorted back to California by Walker and Dan Connor. (Young Coit returned to San Francisco where he married Lillie Hitchcock, the renowned "Firebell Lillie" after whom today's Coit Tower is named.)

Pauline Weaver accompanied Moss on his return to the Walker diggings. There were rumblings of trouble with the Indians and Moss was anxious to avoid conflict. He and Weaver arranged a treaty with the Pimas, Maricopas, Yumas and Yavapais, the terms being that these Indians would stay off the west side of the wagon road between the Sinks of the Hassayampa and Skull Valley. This was to separate the friendly Indians from the more aggressive Apaches. It isn't clear whether the treaty was an official or a personal arrangement, or whether Moss was a government agent at the time.

Late in the fall, Moss was back at his properties along the Colorado. He sold a mine at a handsome profit and was struck with a novel idea. As a gesture of thanks to Ireteba, the Mojave chief who showed Moss his first mine, Moss conceived the idea of taking him along on a trip to the East Coast. He took both Ireteba and a Pima chief on the tour in the hope of convincing them how futile war with the whites would really be. The ocean voyage and train trips culminated in a visit with President Lincoln after which a pair of overwhelmed Indians were returned to their people at Fort Mojave in June 1864.

This Hereuse photo shows the interior of one of the El Dorado Canyon rock huts, with several of the miners enjoying a leisure hour.

Courtesy Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley



WHILE in the East, Moss made a trip home to Iowa and had a happy reunion with his family. Old Nathaniel Moss was a devoted, lifelong Mason as were all his sons. It was probably at this time that John was taken into the Order, but the one meeting was all he could attend for he was soon off again to the West.

Moss did find time to run for Congress in August, but was badly defeated. He was apparently a temporary Indian agent at this time and was kept busy trying to keep peace between the whites and the Apaches. Moss left for Washington in February 1865 to seek a permanent post with the Indian Depart-

(Continued on page 53)

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By NELLIN IVES
Photos Courtesy Author

OUTWITTING THE DALTONS

Above, Jerome Workman. Below, Wharton, Oklahoma, the nearest railpoint to Perry, on September 30, 1893.

JEROME S. WORKMAN, hunkered down by the trail, asked the outlaws surrounding him for directions to his home. He watched closely as one of them drew a picture in the dust of the more than ninety-mile route that "would be the best to take." This friendly advice was being offered by the Dalton gang, although they had been calling themselves by other names for the past two weeks.

Not that Workman didn't know the way home. He also knew that the outlaws intended to rob him of the considerable amount of money in his saddlebags. But he was a lawyer and he was using what he considered logical steps to get the money into a far-away bank and possibly save his life. He could think of several reasons why they didn't attack him on the spot, one being that he had just left the Mennonite store at Cantonment, and there were witnesses to that effect. Another was that there would surely be an opportunity in the ninety miles ahead to get the money. They thought they had time.

It was in 1892 that "D" County, with Taloga as county seat, was opened to settlement. A post office had been established at Taloga in March, and land had been surveyed for farms around the town and city lots within it. Territorial Governor

(Continued on page 58)

The daring ride of a judge and a horse named Lou!

Courtesy Western History Collections; University of Oklahoma Library, Bureau of Land Management Collection

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The Earps in Tonopah

By JOSEPHINE EARP
edited by
GLENN G. BOYER
Photos Courtesy Glenn G. Boyer

Author's Note: This article is an excerpt from the memoirs of Mrs. Wyatt Earp (Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp—1861-1944, who lived with Wyatt from 1882 until his death in 1929). The full memoirs are to be released by the University of Arizona Press in 1975. She takes up the account here after their return from Nome, Alaska in 1901 where their sale of the Dexter Saloon had netted them $85,000.

The Alaskan adventure had freed them to live the kind of life they chose, and they decided to outfit a camp wagon and prospect on the Mojave Desert. The Earps' initial trip was from Los Angeles to Tonopah in the spring of 1902, when Tonopah was booming.

ALL ALONG the trail we had been warned of the atrocious living conditions in Tonopah. They had just had an epidemic of some sort of lung fever that seemed to affect the men but not the women. Scores died during the previous winter. The epidemic was abating when we arrived. As for living accommodations, we could live in our wagon and be as clean and comfortable as in any miner's cabin.

Tonopah was throwing off the pall of its epidemic and resuming a feverish pace of development. The sagebrush was rapidly giving way to streets and buildings. Mines were being punched down all over the landscape.

The town was crawling with old friends

Courtesy Mrs. Mabel Earp Carson

Photo at right, Josephine Earp about 1897. Below, Wyatt Earp (center) shortly before leaving for Topopah, Nevada, taken on the beach at Nome, Alaska around 1900. On left is Ed Englestadt; right, John Clum.

Courtesy Arizona Historical Society

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Courtesy Mrs. Mabel Earp Carson

Josephine Earp in 1943 at age 82.

Wyatt's wife developed symptoms of gold fever; and Nevada was no place to take the cure!

and former acquaintances from all over the West and Alaska. Tex Rickard was on the spot and already in business. He and others urged Wyatt to get into some business or other and start making a mint. I suppose he would have done so if I hadn't adamantly opposed it. It was the very thing we had been trying to escape. But every man who is not beyond the prime of life finds it hard to resist the lure of achievement. Wyatt was no exception. I put my foot down hard for a change.

"This is the very thing we came to Nevada to get away from," I argued. "If you go back to it now, there's no telling when, if ever, we'll have another chance to call our lives our own."

Happily, he saw the sense in this. His recollection of our former happiness in the desert solitude prior to going to Alaska helped my case.

Beyond grubstaking some prospectors and freighting with Al Martin, he did not get deeply embroiled in the commercial life of the place. He and Al carried ore to Sodaville a few times and returned with hay and grain for the stock in Tonopah. Before we left, Wyatt financed the Northern Saloon, leaving it in Al Martin's hands to operate when we departed.

Wyatt got acquainted with a pleasant, well-educated young fellow named Tasker Oddie. He was then, of course, an unknown. Later he made a fortune, lost it, then remade it. Eventually he represented Nevada in Congress. Wyatt was able to be of some help to the young fellow on a couple of occasions. One day some men tried to jump one of Mr. Oddie's claims. When Tasker caught them at it he couldn't think of anything to do but jump into the shallow prospect hole and defy them to move him. The men showed pistols at this point and ordered him off his own claim. Just then Wyatt and Al Martin happened on the scene, driving a spring wagon. Wyatt, always quick to size up that sort of situation, told Al what to do.

"It looks like Tasker's in trouble," he said. "You cover us with the shotgun from behind the wagon— but don't show the gun till after I get out and attract their attention. I'll get in the hole with Oddie. Don't shoot unless I shoot. We'll drop down in the hole and you let 'em have it if I start shooting."

They drew up some fifty feet from the excitement. Wyatt jumped from the wagon and strode rapidly to where Mr. Oddie was in the prospect hole. The men saw him coming but were too surprised or too uncertain to do anything to stop him. Wyatt jumped right in the hole with Mr. Oddie.

By this time, Al was behind the wagon with the shotgun ready.

"Hey, Butinsky," one of the claim jumpers said to Wyatt, "you're asking for trouble. Who the hell do you think you are?"

Wyatt hated to trade on his reputation, but he was still well known then from his exploits in the West. He would use his name if it saved bloodshed.

"I'm Wyatt Earp," he told them. I can imagine the tone of voice and the look which I'd seen and heard once or twice myself. He pointed toward the wagon and Al with the double barrel. "I'd size up the odds if I were you fellows before you head into a lot of trouble you may not be able to handle."

They turned and looked down those twin barrels of Al's shotgun and stood right where they were. The one who had been so lippy according to what Mr. Oddie later told me said, "You win *Mr.* Earp. We'll be going along if it's O.K. with you."

Wyatt nodded assent. "Put those location stakes back up that you kicked down," he ordered them. They did it without complaint.

That parting order from Wyatt was typical. I can clearly remember him telling someone or other, "With hardcases, when you get the upper hand always rub their noses into it. That way they don't forget."

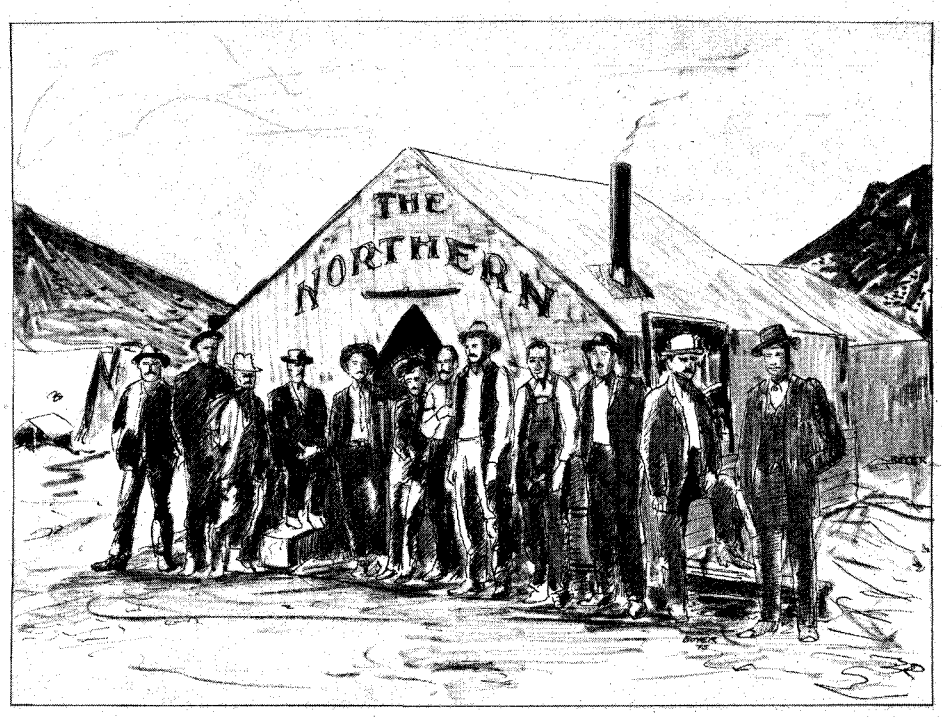
Mr. Oddie couldn't have been more impressed. "Wyatt didn't even have a pistol," he told me. I knew better. He generally carried a .45 under his coat somewhere. But he seldom had to get it out. He was too good a tactician and strategist to have to.

I WAS HAPPY that we had no need to join in Tonopah's frenzied daily struggle for gold in one form or another. I urged Wyatt to leave.

"We can prospect somewhere by ourselves out here in the hills," I argued. "We stand just as good a chance of

(Continued on page 38)

Wyatt Earp's Northern Saloon in Tonopah. Rendering made from the original photo in the Turner-Aster Earp Collection by the author.



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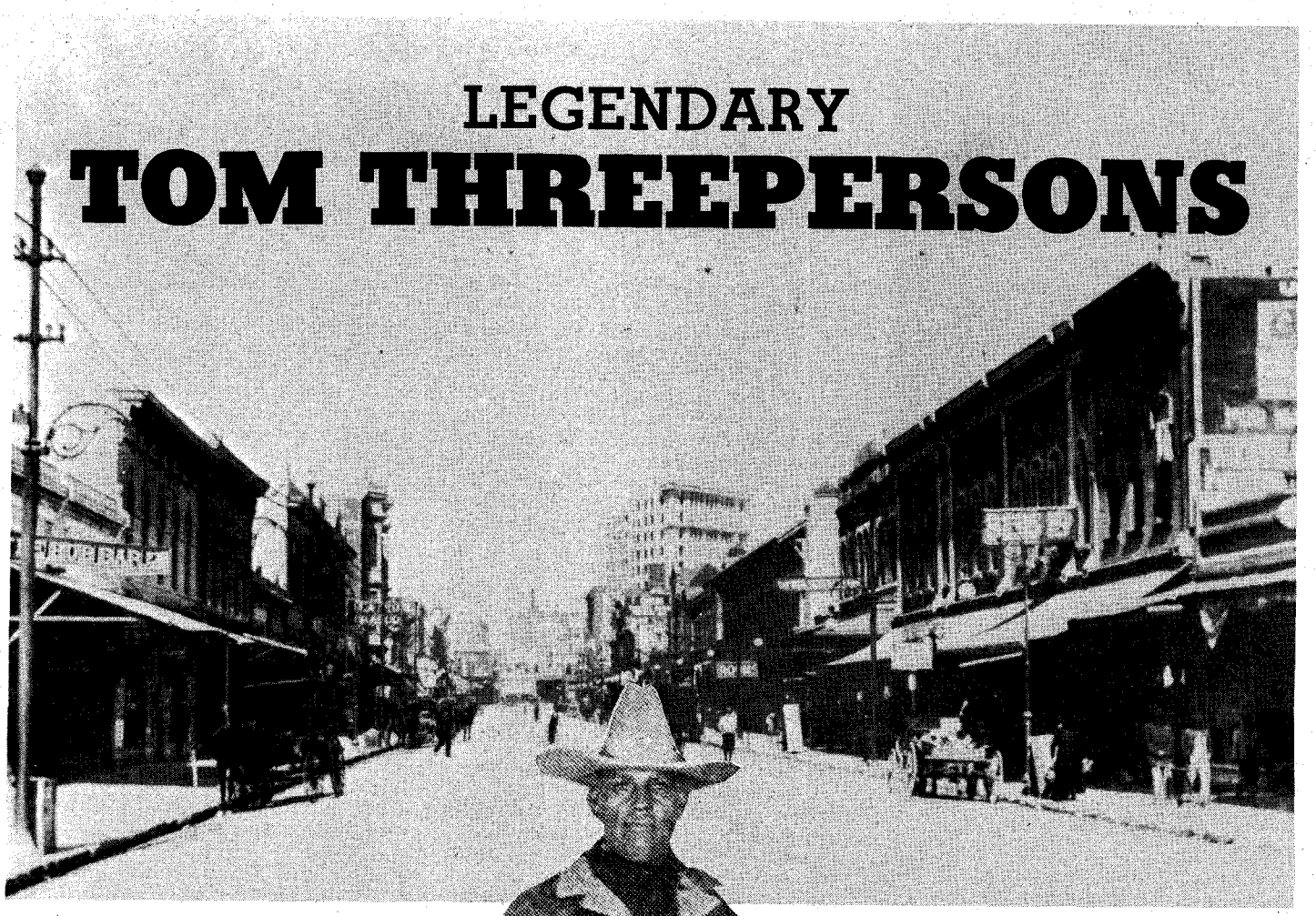
LEGENDARY TOM THREEPERSONS



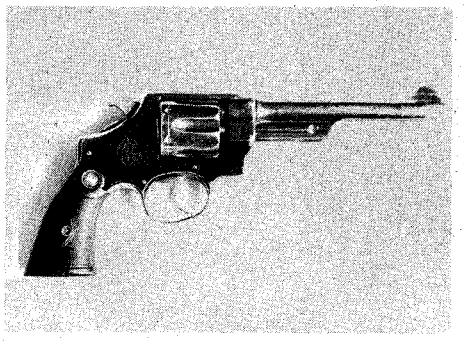
El Paso, Texas as Tom Threepersons first saw it.

The simple conviction that those who slay should not be permitted to further walk their bloody trail, changed the course of this young Indian's life . . .

By MARY'N ROSSON
Photos Courtesy Author

A sense of justice outraged was the grim motive behind the extraordinary journey that led the Cherokee, Tom Threepersons from a small ranch on the sparsely settled Canadian border to the inhospitable wilderness of the Yukon. His determination to deal out the same fate as was dealt his father and his father's childhood friend can well be understood; in the time and place in which he lived, personal responsibility often had to be taken by young men still in their teens.

At right, Tom with his favorite Winchester rifle. Below, Tom's personal .44 Smith & Wesson revolver.



It was nearing twilight that winter day in 1907. The wind was blowing bitter over the snow as Tom Threepersons and his pal, Bill White, trudged homeward after setting their traps. Suddenly they heard shots, then the muffled sound of running horses. Heedless of any danger, the two boys raced to the scene only to recoil in horror. Their fathers lay dead in the reddening snow. The rustlers had struck again.

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During recent months most of the ranches along the Canadian-Montana border had been raided. Both "Old Bill" White and H. F. Threepersons had lost cattle to the thieves. To counteract the raids and supplement the area's meager law force, many of the ranchers had been given deputy sheriff commissions. Young Tom, who learned the art of gun-toting at an early age, was given this commission, along with his father and Mr. White. The authority of the law, however, did not help the two older men when they found themselves outnumbered.

The traumatic loss of their fathers served to bring the grief-stricken sons even closer. Funeral services were scarcely over when they laid plans to follow the killers. Saddlebags were filled with food, horses were groomed and shod, guns were cleaned and oiled, and ammunition checked.

Bill and Tom said their goodbyes and rode away. Weeks passed as lead after lead ended in frustration. At last exhausted, low on supplies and disgusted at their failure to find the rustlers, Tom and Bill returned home.

They learned that two of the men they sought had been arrested and were out on bond. Now Tom's every waking thought was filled with retribution for those responsible for his father's death. Nothing less could satisfy this Cherokee.

Late one evening as Tom approached a saloon a friend grabbed him by the arm and warned, "Look out! The two you are seeking are inside and watching for you. They mean business. Be careful!"

Moving as swiftly and quietly as a panther Tom slipped in the back door. At the sight of the big Indian, his cold eyes searching the crowd, the clatter of the saloon fell silent. Sensing something wrong, the hunted men swung around, guns blazing.

"I killed them both," Tom Threepersons stated unemotionally in a long-ago interview. "Of course," he added, "I was tried for that, but the jury acquitted me after it had been out just seven minutes."

Tom behind the wheel.

TOM THREEPERSONS was born of Cherokee parents on July 22, 1890 in Vinita, Oklahoma. It was said the family name was acquired when Tom's great-grandmother saw three persons walking outside her teepee immediately after the birth of a son. This naming was in accordance with tribal customs.

H. F. Threepersons and Bill White had owned adjoining ranches. It was natural that their two sons would become close pals. As soon as their chores were finished, the boys would pack a lunch and take off, eager for adventure. They roamed the green hills of Oklahoma, perfecting their marksmanship while bringing home game for the table. The boys waded the clear streams, snaring fish with loops made of horse hair. In the sheer exuberance of youth they roped and rode wild colts—never mind the bruises.

Tom and Bill were never separated. Both families moved to the Canadian-Montana border while the boys were in their teens. They attended the famous Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Living on this border enabled Tom to follow the rodeo circuit in Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. Bill did not participate but tagged along for company. Those were happy days with no thought of the perils and sudden sadness that lay ahead.

Several years passed after the deaths of the fathers before Tom and Bill left home. Neither was interested in the quiet life so they joined the Northwest Mounted Police. They were stationed about fifty miles from Calgary, Alberta, but for a year worked with other partners. One day, to their surprise and delight, the two friends were given the assignment of tracking down a trio of smugglers who had murdered an entire family. The hunt was centered in the snowy, desolate wastes of the Yukon in Alaska, where the criminals had last been seen. The belief that the wanted men might be part of the gang that murdered their fathers intensified the purpose of the mission for Tom and Bill.

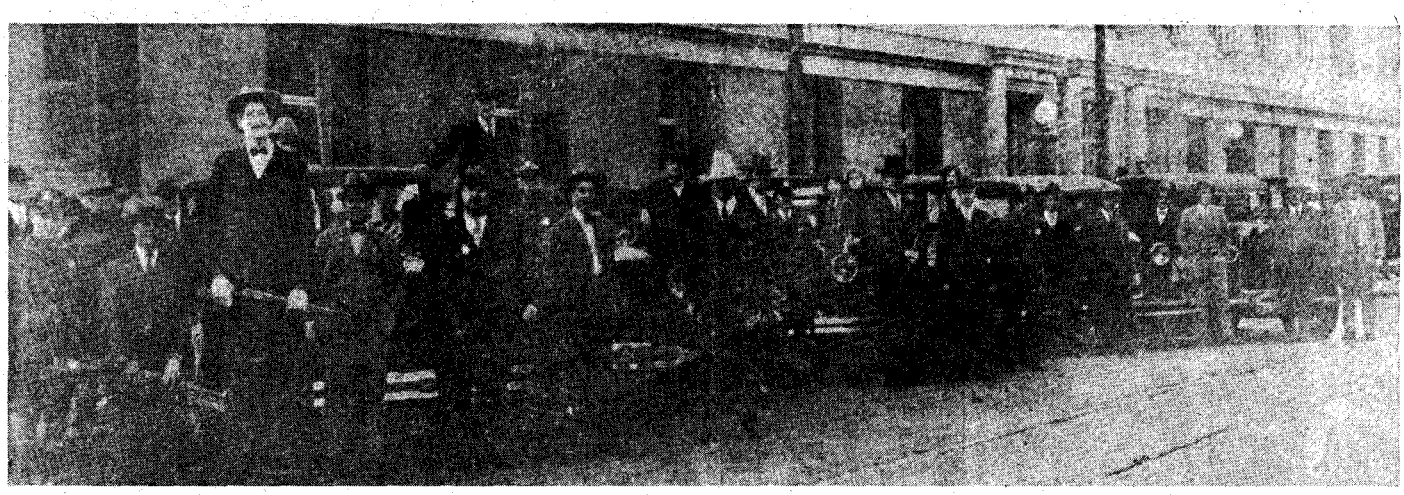
"We trailed them for days," Tom later stated. "Then the tracks got so hard we left the horses at a little camp and started out on foot."

It was a difficult journey. Carrying rifles, food, clothing and bedding made the going tough indeed. The young men, however, were used to the hardships of outdoor living; too, their unwavering determination to capture the criminals kept them on the trail.

For two days they struggled through the snow-shrouded country. Then late one evening, with no warning, they were fired on from ambush. As the young

(Continued on page 36)

Tom Threepersons (wearing white hat) and rest of the police squad. The very tall man is Jake Erlich, at the time considered one of the tallest men in the world.



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Above and Below Courtesy California State Library, Sacramento

Above, Henry Washburn, owner of the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company, with a pet bear. Washburn hired George Monroe to drive for his company in 1868. Below, a Yosemite National Park stagecoach in the late 1800s. Man on the driver's box is Henry Washburn.

YOSEMITE TURNPIKE'S CRACK REINSMAN

By BERKLEY McCOLLUM

Photos Courtesy Author

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George Monroe — one of California's greatest stage drivers

DURING the 1870s a California stage traveling from Mariposa to Merced ran into serious trouble. The coach was thundering down a hazardous mountain grade when the brakes suddenly failed. There were several passengers on board, including two women from England.

It was a situation that demanded quick thinking, and the black man driving reacted immediately. At precisely the right instant he drove the team into a clump of chaparral, bringing the entire rig to a halt. Upon learning that no one was hurt, the driver repaired the brakes, then freed the horses. Two hours later the stage rolled into Merced right on schedule.

The passengers got out and one of the English ladies approached the driver. "That was a splendid bit of driving," she said. "May I ask your name?"

Tipping his wide-brimmed hat the driver replied, "George Monroe."

The party then collected seventy dollars and presented it to Monroe, who reluctantly accepted it. Such a gesture by stage travelers wasn't uncommon, but it was made only to highly skilled drivers. George Monroe was one of the best.

Born in Georgia in 1834, Monroe was in his teens when his father moved the family to California. The Gold Rush was on and the elder Monroe tried prospecting, becoming one of the few black miners in the region. Gold-panning, however, proved unprofitable and the family moved to Mariposa where George's father became the town barber. Afterward, the Monroes settled on a nearby ranch and raised horses.

The ranch was surrounded by some of the finest country in the Sierra, a country that young George liked from the start. As time passed he acquired a remarkable talent for handling horses. This led to his first important job. He became a rider for the Pony Express, covering the route between Mariposa and Merced for a number of months.

Then, in 1868, a man named Henry Washburn visited Mariposa. Washburn owned the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company, a stage line that served the vast region now known as Yosemite National Park. The stage owner met Monroe and was quite impressed with the black man's skill with horses. Washburn offered him a job as a driver and Monroe promptly accepted.

IT WAS the start of a new career and Monroe was pretty excited. Just as it is today, Yosemite was a place of incredible beauty, a land filled with granite cliffs and towering forests, sparkling streams and tumbling waterfalls. Monroe could drink this in daily as he drove his coach over the roads which were primitive at best. Before long he became a seasoned driver.

Horses used for stages were usually spirited and thus somewhat troublesome. Before each trip Monroe would personally inspect every animal in the team. His friends insisted that he actually talked to the horses. Whether he did or not, once on the trail he never experienced a moment's trouble.

Like most stage drivers, Monroe took pride in his appearance. He generally wore custom-made clothes, a buff-colored Stetson, and boots of the finest leather. Everything about him pointed to professionalism. Once, he drove a party from Yosemite Valley to Madera, a seventy-mile trip which took about eleven hours. Normally he would have rested, but a crisis arose. After getting a fresh team, he climbed back on the coach and drove back to Wawona in Yosemite Valley. To Monroe it was simply a day's work.

Henry Washburn never regretted his impulsive hiring of Monroe. Years later, while being interviewed by a reporter writing about staging in Yosemite, Wash-

George Monroe at the peak of his career. Courtesy California Historical Society, San Francisco

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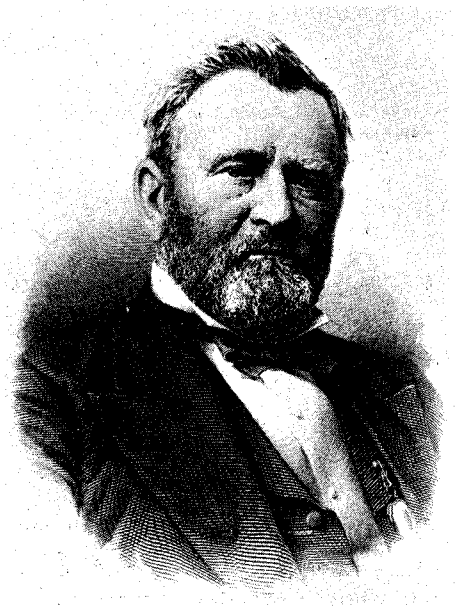
burn said, "Monroe never fell behind schedule and he never used a whip, except to crack it above the horses. I always put him on the box when there was a distinguished party to be driven, and fast and showy driving was expected or necessary."

Such an occasion was in 1879 when Ulysses S. Grant visited Yosemite. The former general was standing next to the coach when Monroe invited him to sit beside him. It was an invitation rarely extended by drivers and Grant quickly accepted.

The stage thundered off, heading into Yosemite Valley some twenty-six miles away. The route lay along the Wawona Trail, a road plagued with plenty of deadly curves. The coach raced along, with Grant totally spellbound as Monroe guided his six horses from side to side, avoiding the worst stones or chuckholes. Sometimes he would crack his whip, but never once did the lash touch any of the horses.

Courtesy New York Public Library



When they reached the valley, Monroe pulled up. Then he handed the reins and whip to his famous passenger. It was the only time he ever did such a thing.

Speaking about it later, Monroe recalled, "The General drove nearly all the way to Inspiration Point and he was as good as any regular driver."

Eventually, other celebrities came to Yosemite. Most of them rode on Monroe's stage. They included President Rutherford B. Hayes, General Sherman, and the famed actress Lily Langtry.

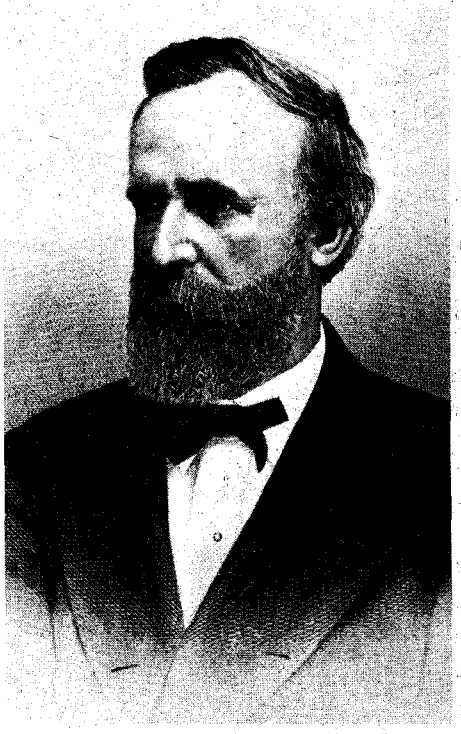
Before long, Monroe's reputation was known throughout the West. People telegraphed ahead just to ride on his coach. Furthermore, he was remembered by many of his former passengers. The two English ladies who had been on his stage years before sent him gifts every Christmas!

By 1886 Monroe had worked under all sorts of conditions—snow and rain in winter, stifling dust and heat in summer. For years he had driven without a single injury to his passengers, horses, or vehicle. And then tragedy struck.

Courtesy National Park Service, Yosemite

Above, George Monroe, California stagecoach driver. At left, General Ulysses S. Grant rode beside Monroe along Yosemite's Wawona Trail, an extremely hazardous road. Grant was one of Monroe's many famous passengers over the years. Below, President Rutherford B. Hayes also traveled on Monroe's stage during a visit to Yosemite.

Courtesy New York Public Library



For some reason never really explained, he tried to ride a big mean-tempered mule. The animal suddenly bucked, throwing Monroe to the ground. The mule then rolled over, crushing him badly. A grief-stricken Washburn had Monroe taken to Wawona.

The stage owner did all that he could, but it was hopeless. The next day Monroe asked to be taken to Mariposa where his family still lived. He died there a few days later. There would never be a greater driver in all of California.

Today Yosemite National Park plays host to thousands of visitors. Many of them manage to drive along the Wawona Trail where a stage carrying Ulysses S. Grant thundered back in 1879. Near the western end of that road lies a place called Monroe Meadows, an eternal tribute to George Monroe, one of the true personages of the Old West.

Truly Western

(Continued from page 5)

—he looked like someone from 1880. His boots were the old-fashioned high-heel high-top cowboy type. His clothes were worn but clean. He carried an old Colt pistol in a homemade holster, and in a saddle scabbard rested a Winchester.

The mule wore a U. S. brand and was topped by an old army split-saddle. He was one of those people who seem ageless (we found out he was forty-eight). We invited this wanderer to have supper with us and enjoyed his company very much. He said he had just come out of Mexico and had been searching for Tayopa, the lost mission. When we asked him how he got back and forth over the border, he said it was no problem for him.

I noticed that he cared for his animals before he would eat supper, and his eyes were constantly searching the desert, although he was very casual about it, not at all like a hunted man. He was very polite and laughed a good deal, but I got the impression that his eyes never laughed, and it would not be a good idea to hunt this man. He said he did not have a home, but had to stop and work once in a while to get a stake. He said he had been doing this for thirty years.

He camped near us that night, and we have never felt so secure as we did that night on the desert with a throwback from the Old West camped one hundred yards away. The next morning he was gone, and we were sorry to see him go. He did not tell us his real name, nor did we ask, but he said he was called Hood River Blackie.

Well, Joe, we only recently discovered your old rags as you call them, so we buy all the back issues we can find. Last week we bought some older issues from a second-hand store, and much to our surprise, on the last page of the October, 1972 issue of TRUE WEST, there was a notice from you that said, "Hood River Blackie, where are you?" It asked that

(Continued on page 62)

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137 Years Old!

By MAX & BEN SANCHEZ
as told to
EVE BALL
Photo Courtesy Sanchez Family

To attain such age at his particular time in history, Francisco Sais must have been born under a lucky star!

Mr. and Mrs. Simon Sanchez.

IN PLUGGING the excellent climate, air, and water of the Ruidoso Valley in New Mexico people still cite the extraordinary age of Francisco Sais, who lived to be 137. They also mention that only a few years back, the town of Ruidoso didn't even have a cemetery.

Francisco Sais was a Navajo, but his Indian name is not known, for when he was stolen and sold to the Spanish-American Sais family on the Rio Grande they did not treat him as a slave, but reared him as they would have their own son and gave him their name. They taught him the tenets of their church and he received the baptismal name of Francisco.

The boy grew up in the days of *carretas* and oxen. He learned the thrift and industry of the Spanish-speaking people. Though he never forgot his native tongue, he spoke good Spanish and, eventually, good English. He became a skilled *vaquero* as well as a competent farmer. The Sais family produced almost all of the food they ate, and Francisco was efficient to the extent that like the others among whom he lived, he was versatile in various fields.

He was adept with both sheep and cattle. And he was an excellent hunter; it was said that he never wasted a bullet. Because of his rugged outdoor life, and perhaps of a diet free of white flour and sugar, he had remarkably good health. At the time of his death, some said that he had had three sets of permanent teeth; others that when or if he lost a tooth it simply replaced itself. Certain it is that both his hearing and vision remained good, and his memory was remarkable.

If Francisco was correct as to the year of his birth (no records were kept on the Navajo Reservation at that time) he was born in 1810. Whether or not he married he did not say, for on some subjects he was very reticent. He did remark that his knowledge of the Navajo language enabled him to understand that of the Apaches and that he was instrumental in maintaining a good relationship with the Mescaleros who sometimes made raids on Rio Grande settlements.

FRANCISCO, when a man of middle age, decided to apply for work as a freighter at Fort Stanton. When asked

(Continued on page 54)

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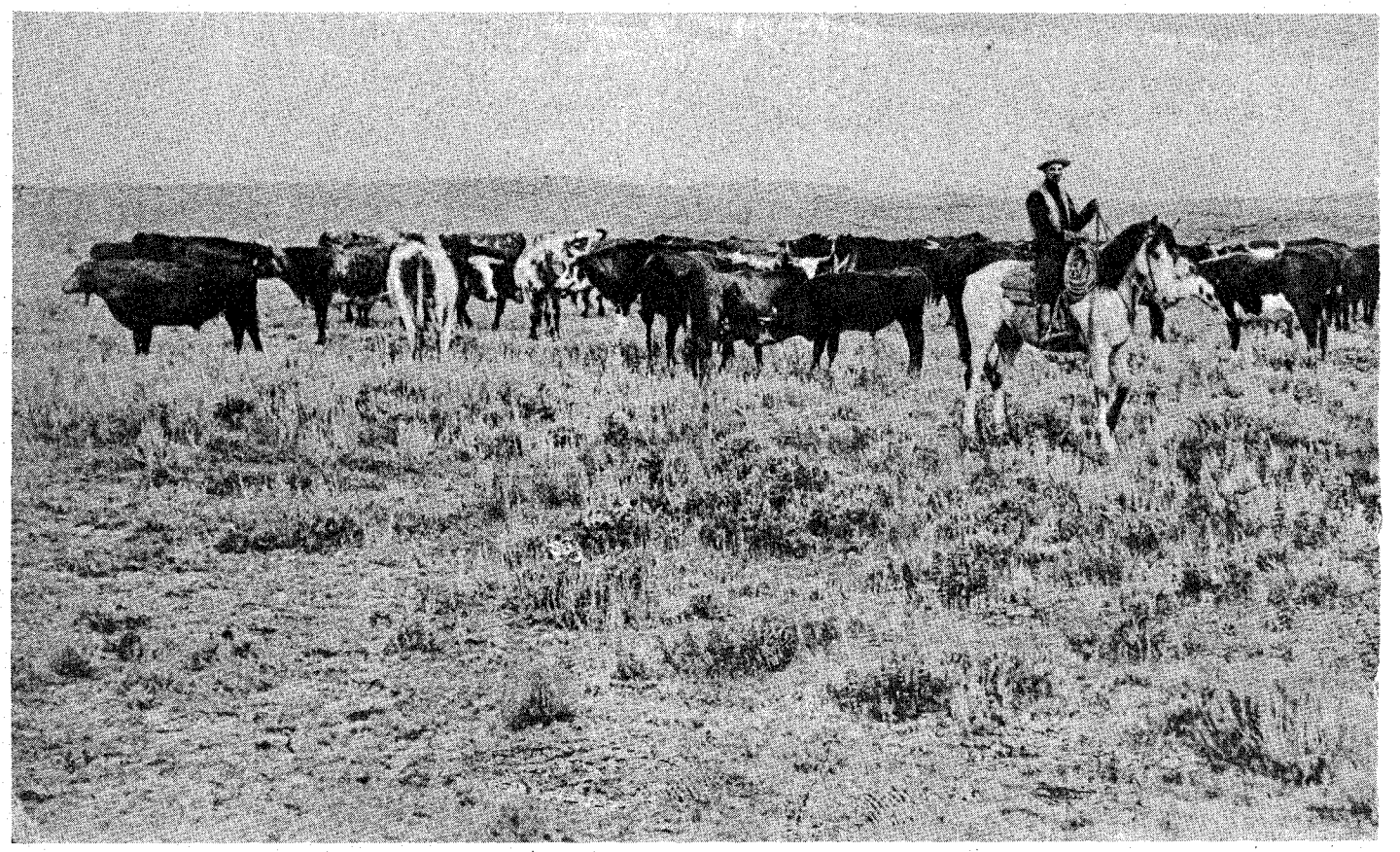
When A Cowboy Falls In



Courtesy Katharine Wesson, Tucson, Arizona

A bit of romance involving a lady's watch and an

IN 1915 after I had become more or less domesticated, I lent an automatic pistol to a man and a few months later he was accused of murder. I never saw that pistol again, but somehow the word got out and it wasn't long until the sheriff came around inquiring. I was uncertain about the caliber of the gun I had lent, and from the sheriff's looks he didn't believe me. He thought that by tracing it back to the place of purchase, he could determine the caliber from the dealer's records. When he asked me where I got the pistol, my answer just added to his doubts of my truth and veracity. His lips didn't say anything but his eyes said, "You're a damn liar."

I didn't blame him. It did sound mighty fishy for me to say that I'd owned the gun for five years and had never fired it or bought any cartridges for it. Actually, I had been pushed into trading for the thing by a cowboy in Montana who lived somewhere in Nebraska and whose name was known to me only as Bird. I didn't know whether it was his first, last, or middle name. He was red-headed and we called him Red Bird. If a fellow wanted a cussin' out or a fight, he could get either or both by calling him Black Bird.

Neither the alleged murder or any part my gun might have played in it had any bearing on my life, but the means by which that gun came into my hands did. What happened was this:

A girl I liked very much and I were not exactly engaged, but we had worked up pretty close to that stage of the game. For obvious reasons, I gave her a nice little watch. It was the pin-on kind. As far as I knew, ladies' wrist watches had not come into style in my part of the country by 1908.

A few months later I seemed to fall flat on my face. I never knew exactly what did happen. We didn't have a fight or anything like that, but somehow we just sort of came to a fork in the road. It was a severe hurt and disappointment to me. More pain and misery were added when she returned the watch, which was her way of telling me that our romance had come to an end.

A former schoolmate of mine in our hometown of Coleman, Texas was at that time taking a business course at a college in mid-state New York. His letters urging me to join him couldn't have come at a better time. There had never been anything before to make me think that a common cowhand needed a business education, but since everything had gone to the bad for me, I jumped at an excuse to get away and try to forget.

I had a little bunch of steers on hand which had to be sold so I would have money to go on. My saddle horses and a few cows were left on the ranch in my

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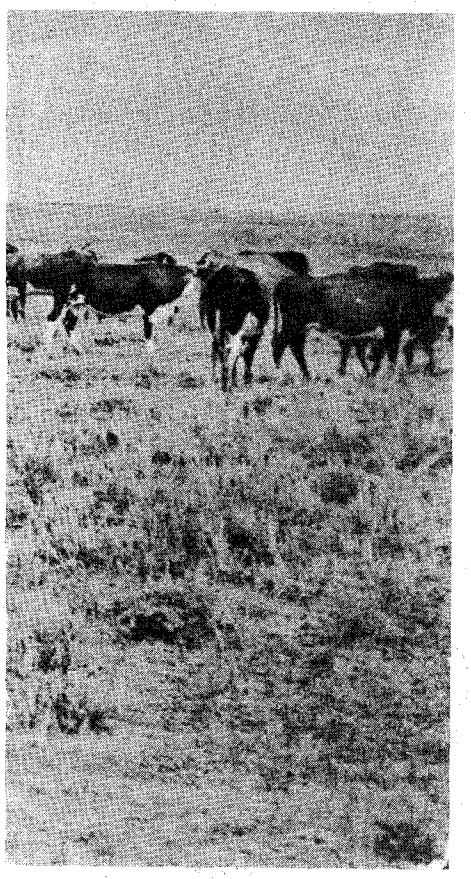
Love



automatic pistol

father's care until my return. I hit the road, by train to Galveston and thence by steamship to New York City. In packing up, I put the watch that had been spurned into my trunk. My boots with spurs attached sat in one corner of the room looking mighty lonely. They went into the trunk too. Anyhow, a fellow never did know when he might need his boots and spurs.

My friend came down to The City and met me at the pier when the ship docked. He guided me around through New York and up to the town where the college was situated. If he hadn't I would have been the worst lost pilgrim that ever touched foot on foreign soil.

HE FINISHED his business course a few weeks ahead of me and left for home. When I finished, I couldn't think of anything in Texas for me but a sad memory.

I had heard stories of the cattle ranges in Montana where big outfits operated with all their glamor and glory and of the wide-open towns where a boy could get a run for his money. I decided to give it a whirl.

I landed in Miles City in mid-April of 1909. The pre-spring roundup convention —locally known as the Stock Meeting— was in session. The town was full of cowboys along with their quotas of wagon bosses, horse wranglers, nighthawks and cooks. They knew that when the meeting adjourned and they scattered out to start work on the far-flung ranges which took in much of the eastern part of the state, a lot of ground would have to be covered, a lot of cattle turned around, and a lot of snaky horses topped off before any of them would see another town. While the owners and general managers were discussing plans for the coming work, the boys were making the best of it by rollin' 'em high, wide and handsome.

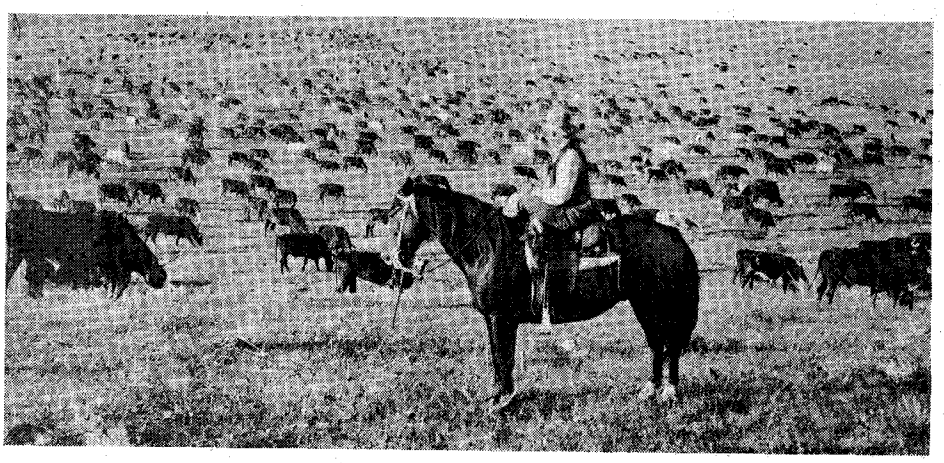
It was some wilder than anything I had ever seen, but I felt more at home there than I had in New York. The fact that some boys were broke after a hard winter didn't make any difference. The wagon bosses packed checkbooks and it was no trouble at all to get an advance on their summer wages. It was the cowman's day and sheepherders were excluded. Everything was there—girls, gambling and good old-fashioned foot on the rail stand up to the bar where the conversation-water flowed in abundance. A boy could write his own ticket for anything he wanted and as much as he wanted.

The thought never occurred to me that I might exploit my recently acquired knowledge of bookkeeping, banking and merchandising into a more lucrative and dignified position. Instead, I bought a saddle and other cowhand necessities, including a bed roll of a tarp, blankets and suggans and took a "position" punching cows. In trying to keep up with my part of the celebration, I had spent all my ready cash, but credit was easy. My boots and spurs came in handy after all.

I worked on the roundup through the summer and fall of 1909, but I hadn't forgotten my disappointment of the year before. Every time I saw that watch in my trunk I was reminded of it. Nevertheless when snow started flying and the temperature kept dropping, I took off for Texas. My three married sisters lived in Coleman and they half-way—just part-way—convinced me that I rated a higher station in life than chasing cows around and fighting with evil-eyed,

(Continued on page 46)

By WALTER W. GANN



Above and Below Courtesy Elmer Kelton

Above, the day herd. Below, the remuda. The rope is one side of the range corral.

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The ears and heels will flash their own message, but a man would

GETTING ACQUAINTED

ONE DAY long ago, an old friend asked me if I knew anything about mules. I answered, "What I know about those animals I could tell to you in five minutes. I know their ears are long, and I've been told their life span is nearly twice that of the horse. They are noted for having a great amount of intelligence, but also have a mind of their own." I wish that was all I had ever learned about them.

Since those days I have only owned one span of mules, but if all the mules in Canada were similar to my little pair, that would have to do me for the balance of my life.

My first experience with mules dates back to the fall of 1920 on the old Cameron Ranch in southern Alberta. I had been in the ranching game in the Val-Marie District of southern Saskatchewan, but that summer I decided to see more of western Canada. After trying to be a lumberjack for a while in British Columbia, I gave it up and landed back on the prairie at the town of Taber, from where I went out to the Cameron Ranch.

On this ranch, then known as "The Noble Foundation," they used hundreds of horses and mules to farm thousands of acres north of the Belly River. This was such a large holding it contained six different camps—each under a separate foreman. Clark Reid was foreman at Camp 5 where I worked.

At harvest time a dozen binders would be in the same field, following each other. I had never seen the like before. Each of our binders was pulled by four horses. Some of the grain fields were two sections each.

That year there was an army of men coming, and going. Hired help came there from every Province of Canada and most of the western U.S.A. During the summer months a man was required to drive not less than eight horses or mules; and in seeding time, sixteen hitched four ahead of fours. They would have lines on their leaders and the pole-outfit. Everything in the middle was tied in there and obliged to go along with the herd. When harvest time came and a green man undertook to drive horses that had been tied into the outfit during the summer, they found that those horses were not even bridle-wise. Many of the fellows would much rather leave than fool with such a horse.

At threshing time, Camp 5 had a large steam engine and a big threshing machine. Can you imagine what those half-broke horses would do when that steam whistle blew at noon?

I HAD BEEN given a job driving a big team of gentle horses on a two-wheeled wagon with a seat. Their names were Dick and Jumbo. Our outfit was called the Snatch Team. The grain haulers for the threshing machine drove four horses strung out, two and two, hauling 150-bushel loads to an elevator built on the bank of the Belly River. They said this elevator would hold 58,000 bushels. The grain was then cabled across the river in large buckets to a bin on the south side. From there it was hauled away to the town of Chin, on the railroad that passes through Taber.

To handle the Snatch Team was con-

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have to have as many eyes as a fly to watch both ends at once!

By RUSSELL V. "Curly" GUNTER

Illustrated by Al Martin Napoletano

WITH MULES

sidered a very responsible job, and I enjoyed my work very much. I learned to be careful with so many strange horses, as I had to throw my chain between the leaders and then hook it fast behind their heels. When the 150-bushel wagons were filled with grain I would tow them off the stubble fields to a road. There I would unhitch, and return to tow another load.

The first day at noon when that steam whistle made its blast, nearly every team that was unhitched from its bundle wagon got away, and scattered themselves all over the prairie. The only extra horse at the outfit was a pinto, but together we made a round-up. This helped to put me in the good graces of the foreman.

My experience with horses had taught me to watch a snuffy, nervous horse, and though I had been close to being kicked several times, I had managed very well until about the second week of threshing. My best pal in the crew, Shorty Waddle, came on the job one morning with a new lead-horse. When I threw my chain back between his lead team, Shorty's new horse showed me a great deal of white in his eye, and he snuffed his nose at me nearly hard enough to blow my hat off my head.

As I went to hook my chain behind the leaders I stepped in from the other horses' side and asked, "Shorty, does this bay horse kick?"

He sat up in that high wagon-box and laughed at me. Then he said, "Hell no. At least I don't think so. He didn't kick me this morning, anyhow."

I then stooped to hook my chain and *bang*—that new horse got me. Shorty laughed so much he was obliged to reset his wagon.

Before threshing was half finished at Camp 5, most of these grain-hauling teams were being changed around. They were being matched up to go across the river on the haul to town, and I had to get acquainted with a whole new set-up.

CAMP 6 was entirely a mule outfit. If they kept a horse on the place it was a saddle horse for the foreman. Early one morning I spied five new wagons hauled by a string team of four mules each. The mule-teams had come from Camp 6 to haul wheat from our threshing rig. When those muleskinners began to back their

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wagons up to that threshing machine it was hard to tell if they were strung out or all abreast. I wondered what they would do when I backed my two-wheeled wagon in front of them. Already it sounded as though those mule drivers were swearing a little bit in two or three languages. I waited for a few minutes until the leaders found their proper places before backing my wagon where it belonged.

I was pleased when I saw the lead mules hop back beside the wheel team. Now I had a chance to throw my chain and hook it. Those mules would jump over my chain, time after time, until our wagon was loaded. When we got to the road I was obliged to unhook my chain behind their heels. I had never been much afraid of a horse and had handled several—both good and some fairly naughty—but I found that I had a great deal more respect for Alberta mules than they had for this young Saskatchewan cowboy. A stranger I always would be to them, and to most of their drivers. The profanity that I would hear in the coming weeks was not even good for those mules to listen to; I don't think those animals understood one command, but they sure could pull in their collar. Pretty soon it was obvious that I had been given my easy Snatch job for a purpose. I wasn't the only man who was scared of a mule.

I decided to study their actions and take a chance. They taught me plenty. While hooking or unhooking my chain I'd watch those long ears. When they cocked one long ear ahead and the other one back, I knew they were trying to get their sights set on me before they kicked.

Those kicks never did land on me, but at times it was too close. I sure didn't cry when the mule teams returned to their base at Camp 6.

That was my first experience with any mule, and I didn't have to lead them, drive them, or ride them, I am happy to say. I know they have tremendous strength for their size, and brain capacity enough to be a special animal if properly trained. But I never could tell if the muleskinners' lingo of cuss words was ever understood.

IT WAS five years later that I learned all I ever wanted to know about mules. They were a little pair of brown fellows, with jersey color noses, that someone had named Jack and Jim. They had had too many bad teachers during their early education, and evidently had out-smarted most of them.

During the very early twenties, the 76 Ranch was still operating close by the ValMarie country. This outfit was owned by a company that had a packing plant at Moose Jaw called "Gordon, Ironside, and Fares." The 76 Ranch was the largest in southern Saskatchewan, consisting of many townships of range. A roundup wagon was used all summer and fall. An outfit of this size always had many saddle horses.

The ranch manager was a friend of mine by the name of T. B. Long. One year a large number of saddle-stock were purchased from a horse rancher on the Missouri River in Montana. When the 76 took delivery of the horses that rancher persuaded them to take along a pair of young mules. It was thought the mules would be the very thing to haul the chuckwagon from place to place while gathering beef on the range.

That was the first time I'd heard of Jim and Jack, but during the next six years these mules built up a reputation for themselves. It was during their stay on the 76 that they learned how to run—hitched to a chuckwagon. It always took several cowboys to hitch them up, and the wagon would be followed by two more cowboys to stop the mules and get them unhitched again. You had to front-foot them with a lariat rope to harness them or to take the harness off. This seemed to be a great pastime for the cowboys, but I heard that the cook didn't enjoy it so much.

Then for a few years I heard nothing more about the little mules from the Missouri River—until they came to Ponteix to the sale barn. My oldest brother, Seth, owned the livery and feed barn in Ponteix in 1925. It was also called a sale barn, as horses were sometimes bought and sold there.

Jim and Jack showed up for sale. Since my brother provided a driving team or two during the winter months for livery teams, the mules' owner tried to interest Seth by telling him Jim and Jack could handle all the livery driving for the town.

Seth was not easily fooled by an animal or its owner, and he knew he had an eager seller. There would soon be a feed bill to pay, and the owner had not found anyone interested in his mules. Finally he said to my brother, "You give me twenty chickens, and they're yours."

"I should have about twenty hens," Seth said, and they walked away laughing about their deal, to look at the chickens. When they were counted, there were only nineteen hens there, but the man was so happy to be the owner of nineteen chickens instead of those mules, the deal went through.

The first time there was a livery trip to make, of a long distance, Seth drove the pair of mules himself. Mr. Reigle, a horse rancher whom we had all known for years, arrived in Ponteix on the train and wanted to get out to his ranch about thirty miles south.

There were always willing helpers around Seth's barn to help hitch the mules. That day they placed the cutter inside the barn, facing out, with the big door closed. When the mules were hitched and the door opened, the two men, the cutter, and the mules, literally flew out of that barn. Seth told me afterwards that it would have been almost as effective to pull on their tails as to pull on the lines.

The cutter left town about four o'clock. Some twenty miles south they had to cross the Divide, or watershed, where coulees were full of snow. There had been no sleigh tracks for weeks. Those little mules were down over their backs sometimes. Occasionally the cutter was upset, but it made very little difference to those Missouri River critters. They would take in about three big puffs of breath, and then go again in high gear.

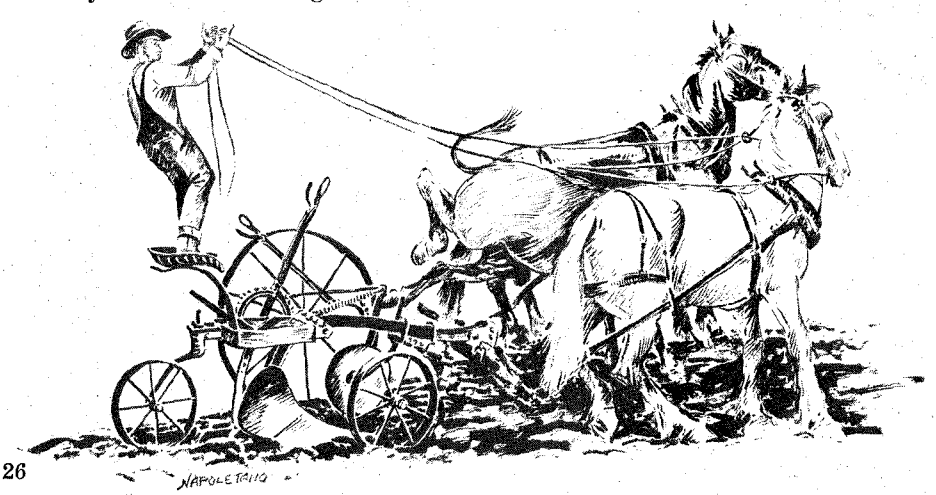
When they got to Mr. Reigle's horse ranch it was getting late and dark. Seth drove the cutter into the horse corral to get the mules unhitched. Our old horse-rancher friend raised and broke and sold many horses in his day, and always lived an outdoor life, but he said he was never as happy to be back in his own corral safely. That night both men learned something about mules: They would not eat, nor would they take a drink of water until they were thoroughly cooled off.

Seth stayed the night at the Reigle ranch, expecting to get an early start for Ponteix the next morning. At daybreak he and Mr. Reigle got the mules harnessed and tied them to the plank fence of the corral. They pushed the cutter around and placed the cutter pole between them. When the mules were untied, they circled the corral on high, while Mr. Reigle opened the gate. Here he watched Seth sail out through the gate at full speed, going directly toward the river, which had banks six feet deep and straight down. Seth was trying his best to steer away from that river. Finally he got them turned toward the east, where they went into another washout over their heads in snow and part of the harness broke. But the mules kept running. Only after making a complete circle on the river flats did Seth get them back to the horse corral where Mr. Reigle closed the gate.

It was after dinner before the harness was repaired and Seth left for Ponteix. When he got home he drove into the corral behind his barn and on into the big stable before unhitching them.

The mules were not used many times after that as a livery team, but they were fairly well fed while living an idle life at the sale barn.

(Continued on page 61)



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Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient! If possible, please type your query; or if handwritten, print or write clearly, especially names, dates, and places—and most of all, please be brief. In accord with the content of our magazines and purpose of this service since its beginning, preference is given writers whose trails have grown dim out West: lost ancestors and relatives who were sheriffs, pioneers, Forty-niners, muleskinners, cowboys, Indians and Indian fighters, and so on. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters as soon as we can. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to below is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

Brooking-Brookin

My great-grandfather Brooking, first name unknown, was sheriff of Victoria County and killed during the Taylor-Sutton feud. His wife, my great-grandmother, was the daughter of an Indian chief, Kiowa, I think. My grandfather, Robert Pittes Brookin, dropped the 'g' in his last name during adulthood. All information will be appreciated and letters answered promptly.—Dorothy Whitley, 612 S. E. 7th St., Mineral Wells, Texas 76067

Moore

I'd like to hear from any of the Tom Moore family that lived east of Portales, New Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s, or from anybody who might know of them.—James A. Sexton, P. O. Box 5311, Salem, Oregon 97304

Paramore-Talbert

I have a Bible, copyright date 1874, which belonged to Wm. M. Paramore, then to G. H. Talbert, both with the address of Altamont, Kansas. I would like to hear from their heirs.—D. R. Munro, Box 291, Petersburg, Alaska 99833

James Martin Coonce

My dad served as a U. S. Marshal under Judge Parker when Oklahoma was Indian Territory. I was told that he also worked some in Kansas around Wichita. His name was James Martin Coonce, and I never saw his family. His father, James Isaac Coonce, was supposed to have come over from Germany with his folks when he was a boy. They settled around Cape Girardeau, Missouri and later lived in Johnson County, Illinois. My grandmother's name was Rice—probably Mary Rice, but I'm not sure.

My dad had one sister whose name I do not know and two brothers. One brother, Johnny, died at two years and the other, Hughey, died in his early forties at Hartford, Arkansas. The last name is Coonce and any other spelling would be of no connection or value.—Ortha Griffin, 601 North Bryan, Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447

Sims-Belcher

I am seeking information about my great-grandfather, F. M. Sims. I don't know what the initials stand for. He came to Red River County in East Texas during the Civil War. He was a colonel in the Confederate Army and discharged there. He married my great-grandmother, Sofia Davis, in 1871. They had two sons. He said he was one of the original owners of the Churchill Downs Race Track in Louisville, Kentucky. He went to England and bought horses for the race track. After the war he bought land in Red River County, near Clarksville, Texas, to start another race track. He went back to Kentucky to sell his interest there and was never heard of again. He was supposed to have been born in Prussia. I would like to get any information I can about him before he went to Texas, before the Civil War, about his parents or where he came from.

I'd also like to know about my great-great-grandfather, Charles W. Belcher or his parents. He would have been born in the early 1830s. His father died when he was four days old, in or around Mobile, Alabama. His mother, named Betty, remarried either in Alabama or Arkansas. She and her new husband, George Thompson, and family moved from Mobile on a riverboat up the Mississippi River to Yell County, Arkansas in 1878. The Belchers originated in Ireland and I'd like to know about any of Charles' folks and where they came from before settling in Alabama.—Mrs. Harold F. Johnston, 324 N. 7th Street, Tooele, Utah 82074

Ames

I would like to contact some of the descendants of Arthur Ames who moved to Texas in 1909 or 1910. He rented a farm in Bay Center, Washington from my grandfather, L. H. Rhoades. He wrote my father about 1915 asking him to send him some native grass seed from Washington to see if it would thrive in Texas. Whether or not he sent it I don't know. There are two graves in the Bay Center Pioneer Cemetery, and the stone on one reads "W. W. Ames, 1844-1908, Gone but not Forgotten." The large one reads Ames. I am writing a history of the L. H. Rhoades family.—L. R. Rhoades, Star Rt. 1, Sonth Bend, Washington 98586

Spears

My father, Franklin Thomas Spears, was born in Hemphill, Texas, August 10, 1886 or thereabouts and died July 25, 1951, and I'd like to hear from anyone knowing about his people. My grandfather, Tom Spears, died in Hemphill, Texas when my father was one year old, about 1887. He was married to Catherine Isabell Talbert and they had several children who died at birth or shortly thereafter. My father and one older sister were the only ones who lived. The sister's name was Anne.—Mrs. Gertrude Jeter, North Street, Apt. 1B, De Ridder, Louisiana 70634

Sneed

I am seeking information on my great-great-grandparents, Peter Lafayette Sneed, born 1836 in Carroll County, Arkansas and wife, Nancy, born 1835 or 1836, or any of their descendants. Their children were Martha Elli, Saby C., Robert N., Isora F. and Elizabeth. I will answer all letters.—Lloyd Joe Sneed, P. O. Box 669, Weiser, Idaho 83672

Hoff

My father, Frank Lovelace Hoff, was born in St. Charles, Iowa on March 1, 1874 and died in Farmington, New Mexico, January 16, 1929. He had at least one sister, Anna Phillips, and one member of the family was named Thornton Fleming Hoff. He died in 1912, evidently in St. Charles, Iowa. I will be so grateful for any information about this family.—Elta Hoff Braatelien, 1501 South 16 Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85034

Hughes

I am looking for descendants of William or Greenbury Hughes. I believe they had a sister named Jane who married someone named Sharp and had a daughter named Tillie. These two men were brothers to Alfred Buchanan Hughes, my grandfather, and were living in the Menard, Texas area in the early 1900s. —Autie J. Hughes, Box 144, Winston, Oregon 97496

Stout

My mother, Arlena Elizabeth Shiries, had two boys from her first marriage, Jewell and Buell, born in 1900 and 1902. She married my father, Harry Octavus Stout in Shattuck, Oklahoma in 1909 or 1910. Two boys were born to them in Shattuck. Lee died at eight or ten months; my younger brother, Hollis, was less than two when my parents came to Colorado.

My father had worked in cotton mills in Oklahoma and wasn't able to find that type of work in Colorado. He left Edgewater, Colorado, suburb of Denver, in December 1912, and I was born the following June 17, 1913. He was at his sister's home in Sayre, Oklahoma in 1926 and left for Bowie, Texas, driving a 1926 Model T Ford. He is also known to have worked as a water-well digger around Hobart, Oklahoma, Plainview, and Avalon, Texas.

I have lost my mother and two brothers. Father would be eighty-four if living, and if he has gone, I'd like to know when and where he was buried.—Mrs. Helen Urban, 2222 Lamar Street, Denver, Colorado 80214

Van Cleave

Compiling Van Cleave genealogy. Would like to hear from all descendants, all spellings.—L. Merrill Van Cleave, 7223 Chartercrest Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46805

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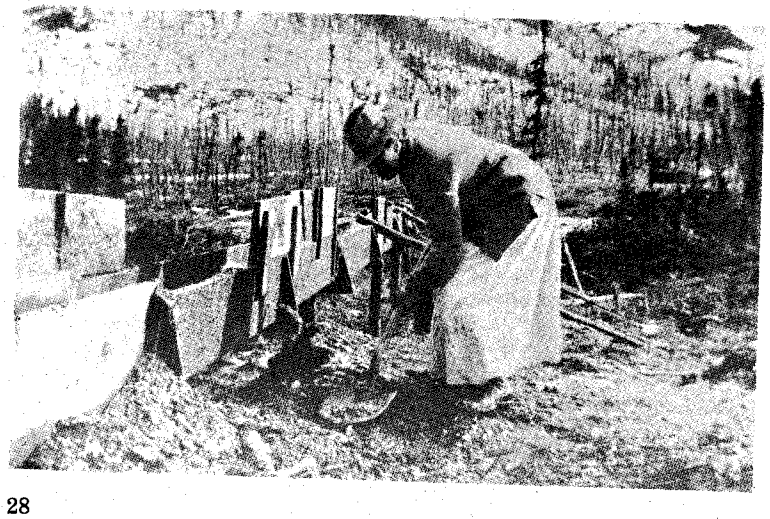
MOLLIE THUMM AN HONEST GOLD DIGGER

Above, Mollie Thumm in back of her cabin on Doric Creek. Below, Mollie at the sluice box.

One thing for sure — no woman was ever in the Yukon by accident. Gold drew them there or love of a man who wouldn't come home



By THELMA KIMMEL
Photos Courtesy Author

I HAVE on my table pictures of two handsome women, one sent to me by Kate Rockwell as she appeared before "We, the People" in evening dress. As Klondike Kate, she has been featured widely in pictures and magazine stories. The other is of Mollie Thumm in an apron. But who—outside that Land of the Midnight Sun—has ever heard of Mollie?

Because they couldn't compete with the Klondike Kates and the Lady Lous almost nothing has been written about those courageous girls who followed their husbands into the Yukon to search for gold. "We just weren't very romantic or exciting," Mollie told me almost forty

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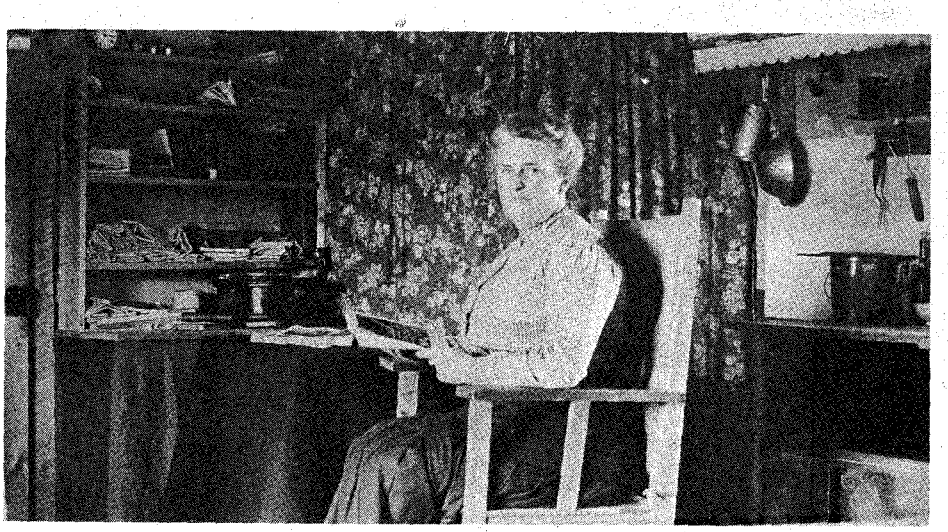


Photos from the Mollie Thumm Collection

years ago as she talked of her past. "We took our pots and pans and knitting instead of fancy clothes and toiletries and we weren't above using an axe or pick if necessary. We gathered berries as well as gold in our gold pans, and we put curtains on boxes for cupboards but we took a gun out for game and turned a hand to help at the sluice box.

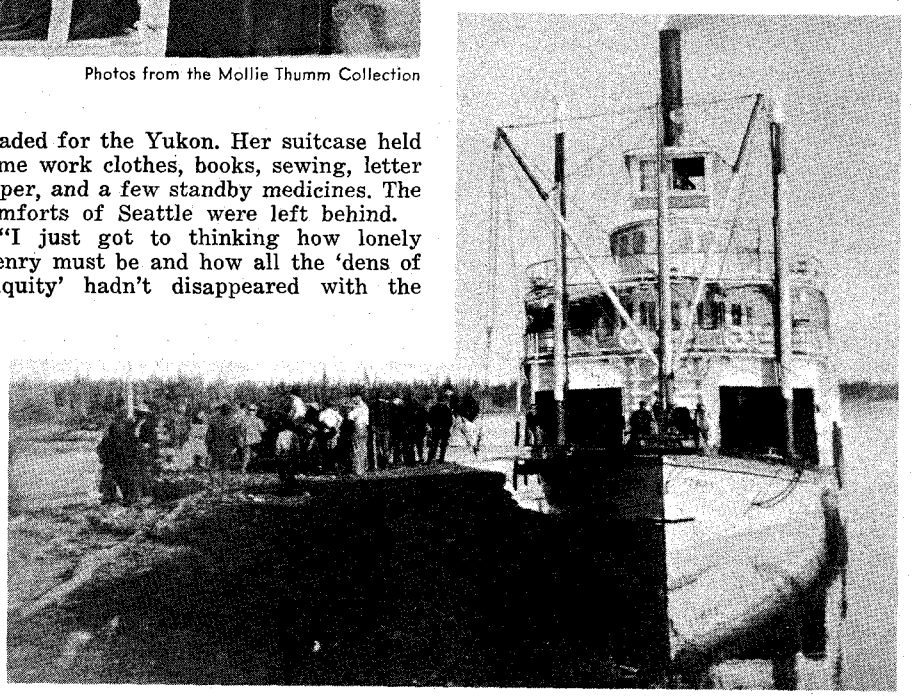
"A miner half dead with hunger, frostbite, or pneumonia might drag himself to our doors to be nursed back to health, but Robert Service couldn't very well put that in the poetry he was writing about those wild old days in the North."

Mollie Thumm didn't want to be a "Gold Digger"—not even an honest one. But one day, like other wives whose husbands had been lured by gold, she put on her best black outfit, hat and veil, and headed for the Yukon. Her suitcase held some work clothes, books, sewing, letter paper, and a few standby medicines. The comforts of Seattle were left behind.

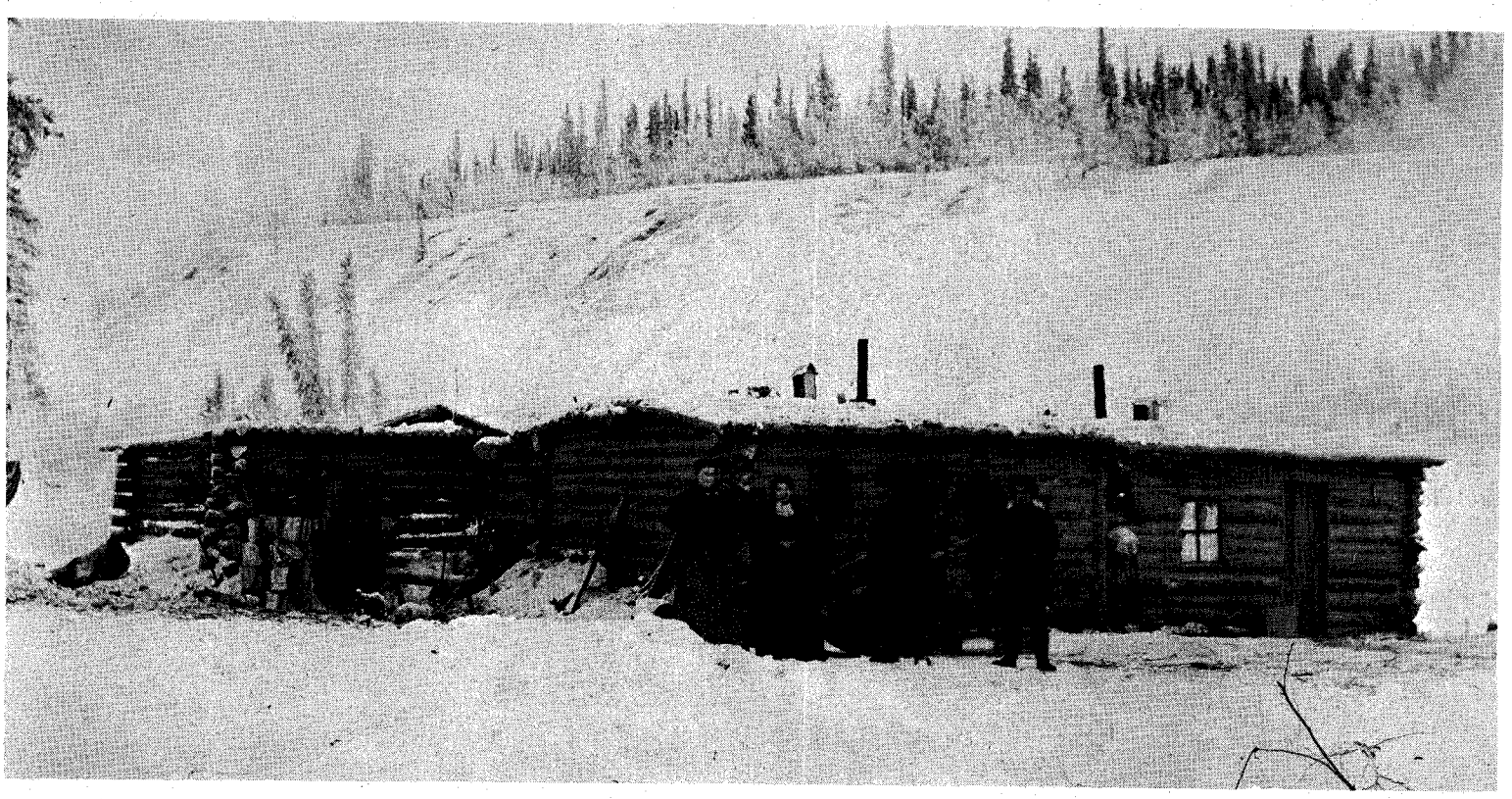
"I just got to thinking how lonely Henry must be and how all the 'dens of iniquity' hadn't disappeared with the Gold Rush," Mollie said, and her eyes twinkled. "Henry wasn't much for writing. He sent me picture cards with his name, and maybe a line or two, just to let me know he was alive. I figured it was time I joined him."

AT the turn of the century miners were still digging for gold along the Yukon River and its tributaries or washing out the leavings of fabulous strikes. Oc-

At left, Mollie in her Yukon River cabin home. The *Yukon* landing at Nanana, Alaska, below.



A road house on the trail.



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Above (left), going for the mail. On right, Mollie gets winter wood piled.

casionally new fields were found. Some men stayed with endless patience—Henry Thumm did—while others were defeated at the first try.

Mollie went to Skagway on a luxury boat that had in its hold a herd of steers which were literally gold on the hoof in those pre-refrigeration days. The sailor-cowboys who cared for these animals on their trip of no return were college fellows working their way through school. Their principal requirements were to be stout and quick of foot; and it helped that one of their fathers was a partner in a cattle company.

"After feeding the steers, they'd dandy up—though the smell didn't always wash off—and visit our deck to dance and flirt with the young women on board. They were privileged passengers with valuable cargo. One old tycoon on the ship exchanged some high-priced cigars for a chance to watch the steers be fed, but I don't think any women ever ventured into the hold," Mollie said.

"There were all kinds of folks going to the Yukon—gamblers, show people, miners and their families, businessmen, natives returning from hospitals or schools in the States, women of leisure, teachers, missionaries and slickers. We didn't ask questions but answers were whispered. We all played games together; charades was a favorite. One could dance and play cards, and food on the boat was the best."

Mollie admitted she was sort of scared in Skagway though the violent Gold Rush Days were supposedly over. It was a relief when the cattle that hadn't been sold there were loaded in boxcars to trail Mollie's passenger train, and one and all embarked for Whitehorse.

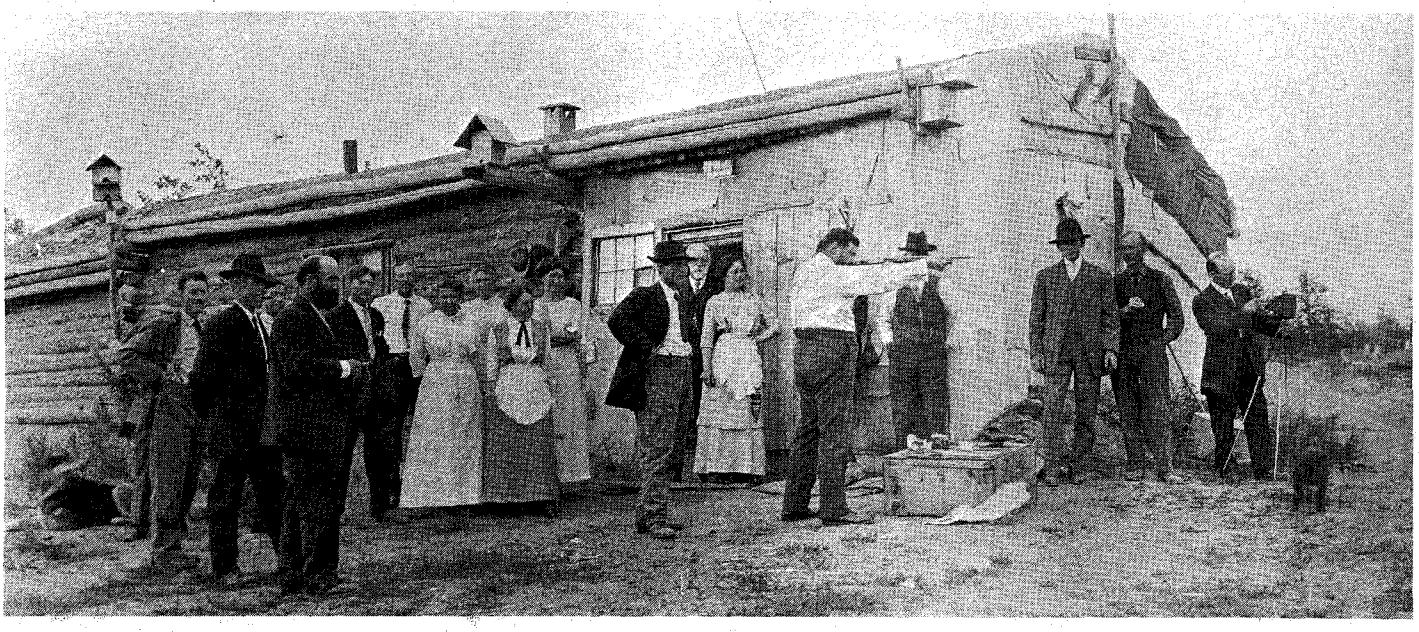
"If I wasn't scared before, I sure was then," Mollie remembered, shivering a little. "Traveling that trail route was an experience in beauty and terror. If you could keep yourself from rolling with the train spasms long enough to look out the windows, there were gorgeous waterfalls. Tunnel Mountain had a 300-foot pass cut 1,000 feet above the gulch. Rounding Rocky Point you could see the torture-trail of a few years back and the piles of bleaching bones and skins—and if the wind came just right you could still smell the odor of the thousands of horses that died on the trail in '98. Men died, too, in that awful scramble to beat the others to gold. In places the cliffs hung over you like jaws ready to crush the train, and we moved perilously over a swinging bridge that spanned a canyon."

(The year that Mollie and Henry left the Yukon a slide of giant boulders covered this track, stopping traffic for a while but they were lucky. It had cost $10,000,000 to build—$3,000,000 more than we paid for the whole of Alaska. Gold worth $200,000,000 was taken out of the Yukon in the six years before 1902; it was the last frontier for a miner using hand labor.)

THE PASSENGERS were relieved to get to the security of Whitehorse, a city that came into being with the first train to arrive there. It was named for the high leaping white caps racing with the river rapids nearby. The Gold Rush city of Closeleigh was moved bodily from across the river. "We slept in a comfortable hotel to the tune of bears growling and huskies howling," Mollie remembered.

The Yukon waited at Whitehorse to take passengers downriver, a trip of almost 2,000 miles if one traveled its full length to the ocean. The trip back took twice as long. The steers that weren't grabbed up in Whitehorse were put on a barge in front of the steamer.

Miners stage a shooting contest, part of a Fourth of July celebration.



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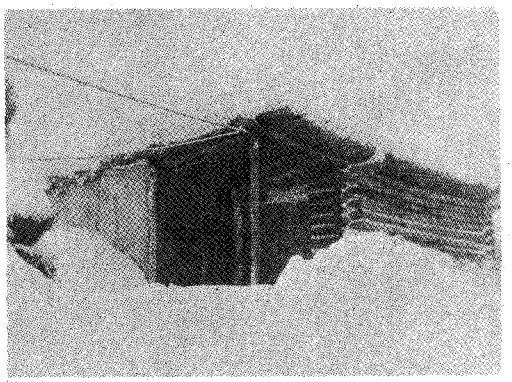


The horse barn in winter.

The trip to Dawson, Mollie's temporary destination, was a 460-mile panorama of towering mountains, heavily wooded, or barren hills, rock cliffs, narrow gorges, rushing rapids, lakes and wide open sweeps.

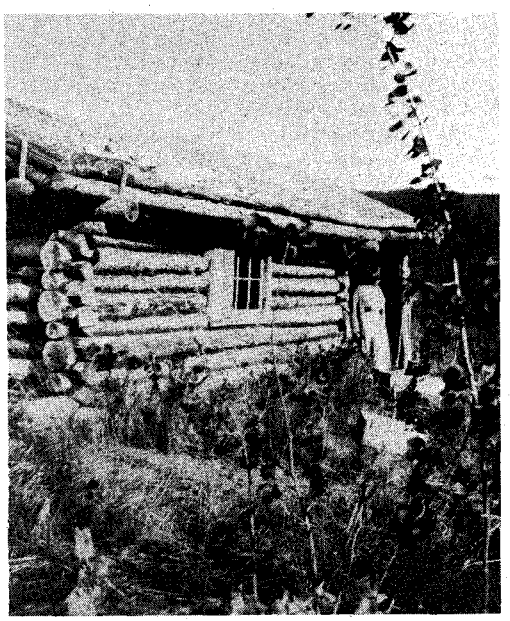
"It would be impossible to describe all of it," Mollie said. "There were many stops at a miner's camp or at settlements for fuel, mail, or taking on or leaving passengers. Cattle were sold at each landing. The luckless creatures were sometimes in a stew kettle before an hour elapsed, so hungry were the game-and-fish saturated miners for a taste of beef.

"The woodchoppers were picturesque fellows, coming with dogs and horses to bring wood to the bank. And we passed Indian villages where we took on fish and furs. Many rivers, creeks and lakes feed the Yukon. Fort Selkirk was an early-day Hudson's Bay Post that boomed again in the Gold Rush. Indians had raided the fort, killed the factor and burned the buildings in the Forties. Huskies were raised there and, later, hay and grain and horses."

Henry was waiting in Dawson, once a fabulous city with thousands of people

(Continued on page 35)

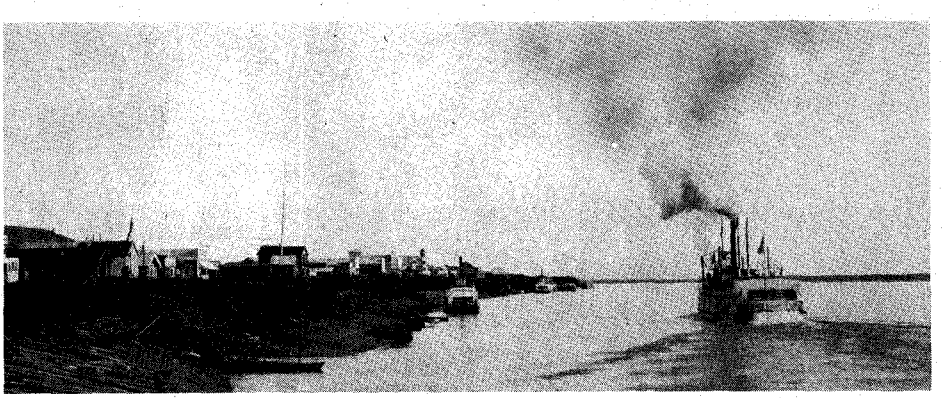
One of Mollie's cabin homes in the Yukon River country.



Going home on the *S.S. Seattle*. Henry in center, Mollie sitting with group on right. All are "Yukoners" going home—some emptyhanded, some with enough to buy a good home in the States, and some with a small fortune.

A miner poses with his kill. Bears were feared by many.

Above, the Thumms on the way out from the Tenana area, heading home. Henry is standing at far left, Mollie is seated at far left. Below, the *Yukon* at Rampart.



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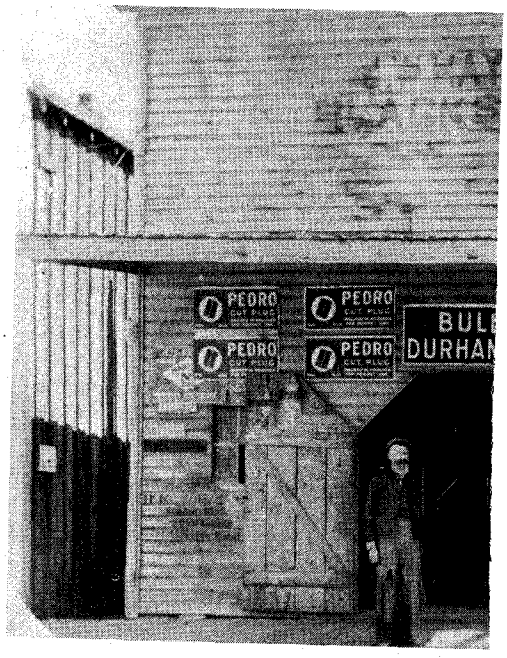

A MIX OF SHREWDNESS AND NERVE

By LEE DUFUR
Photos Courtesy Author

By the time Bill Hay was eighteen, he'd taken a crack at all the frontier had to offer; then, encouraged by living through it, Bill did it all over again!

WHEN James Willis (Bill) Hay died in 1926, at the age of eighty-four, Ben Hur Lampman, poet laureate of Oregon, wrote his obituary. He titled the eulogy. "Bill Hay Takes a Big Share of Oregon Past to Grave." In prose that reads like poetry Mr. Lampman paralleled the life of Bill Hay and Oregon Territory—for the man and the land had been young and wild together, and each had an effect on the other.

Bill Hay came to Oregon as an emigrant. He was acquainted with and later fought the ferocious Rogue Indians when he was fourteen years of age. He worked on the first wagon road over the almost impassable mountains from Crescent City, California to the inland valleys of Southern Oregon. Later he was blacksmith for the stagecoach lines, and rode with the stages from stop to stop to shoe the horses.

With a friend Bill discovered the Gold Hill Pocket, one of the richest gold mines in Southern Oregon. He later managed a warehouse for the Southern Pacific Railroad when stagecoaches were no longer used. He farmed and mined intermittently, and in his last years he fished the Rogue River with a pole he had made from old stage whips.

Bill Hay showed a different personality to almost everyone. He was called taciturn by some, loquacious by others. One man has said that he was so crooked his "feet wouldn't track." Others have said Bill was so honest that he was careful to the point of boredom in trying to recall an incident exactly as it happened. At any rate, when Bill sat with his cronies in the saloon retelling the old stories and after he was too old to match friends drink for drink, he pretended to drink, letting his whiskey run into his beard and wringing it out into the spittoon.

Ben Hur Lampman knew Bill well and described him in those last years as "a silent man, for the most part, whose silences had the dual quality of friendship and raillery, and who made speech

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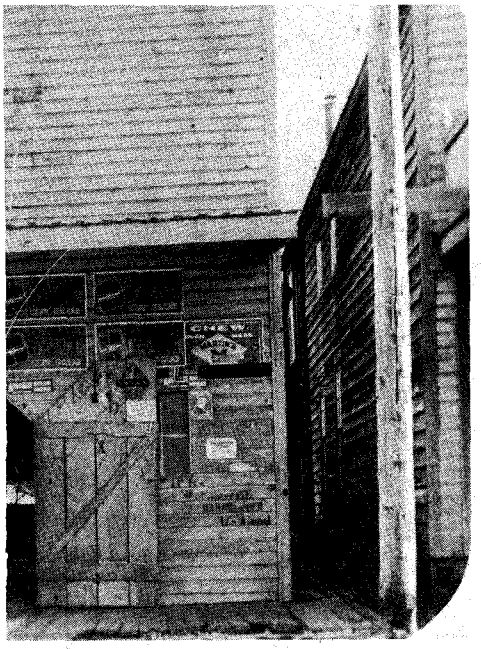
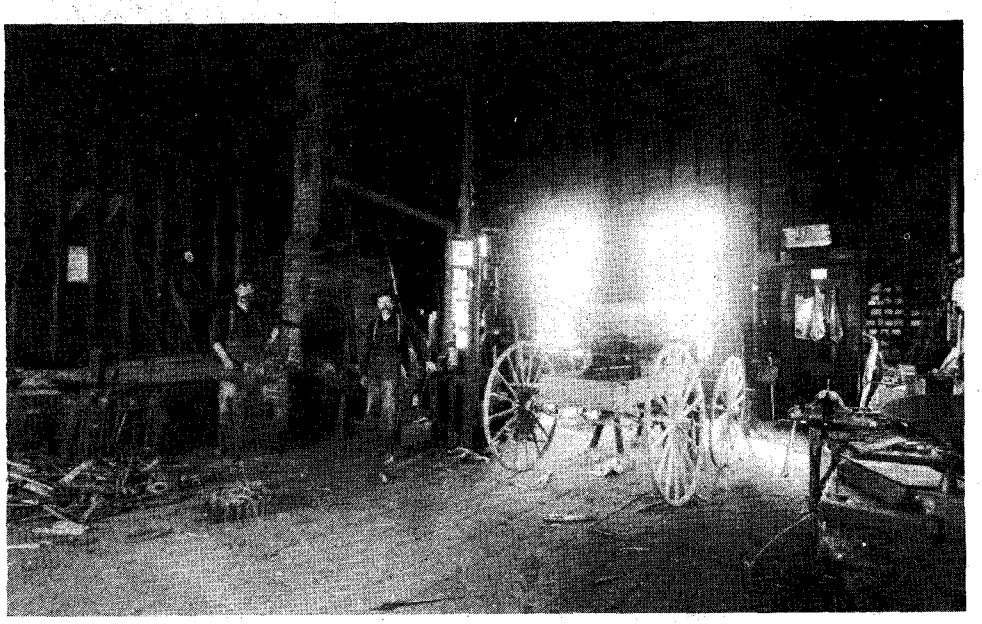


with a piercing glance of his singularly keen eyes. By way of comment, such a glance from Old Bill Hay was customarily final and left nothing to be said, whether the matter concerned local politics or an extraordinary rough contest with a big trout, or the windy reminiscence of some fellow ancient."

BILL HAY became a part of Oregon Territory in 1854, when he was twelve years old and almost five years before Oregon became a state. "He saw those interminable, dusty, splendid miles with the eyes of boyhood," Lampman said. What he didn't say was that Bill—then known as Willie—walked almost the whole of those "dusty splendid miles" all the way from Kentucky, a distance of nearly 2,000 miles, in five months. And a good part of that way he walked behind 5,000 sheep. The owner of the sheep also had 400 head of cattle which he was driving to California.

On far left, Bill Hay (seated) and his family at the Hay Cemetery in 1910. At left, Bill Hay in front of his blacksmith shop in *Gold Hill, Oregon, about 1920.* Below, the youngest of Bill Hay's children in 1890. At bottom, the interior of the blacksmith shop in the 1920s.

Note: The author informed us that the spelling of Bill Hay's name on the front of his smithy was the *error of an itinerant sign painter* who spelled it "Hayes" instead of "Hay's."



Bill's family had started West in a train of twenty wagons drawn by oxen. The sheep owner made arrangements with the train members to help him with his animals, for which aid he promised that he would lead them through good grazing land, and see that they had no trouble with Indians. The grownups in the wagontrain voted to accept the deal. They had several youngsters who would make good herders.

Bill, being eleven, was old enough for herding but not for voting. So herd he did. When he was a bent old man, Bill Hay had no trouble recalling those panting, bleating, smelly sheep. In an interview in his seventies, he told about that journey West. "We didn't go by the regular emigrant road, though we often crossed it. For the most part we were five or ten miles to one side of the road, and while it was rougher traveling, there was good pasture and lots of wood and water." Bill did not remember this crossing as a trial or hardship, but one of excitement and high adventure—except for the sheep.

When the Hay family settled on their donation land claim in Southern Oregon, that area of the Territory was isolated from the rest of the world. In any direction to get in or out, one had to cross mountains of such ruggedness that proper road building was beyond the means of people living there. Staples had to be hauled from Oregon City that first year, a distance of nearly 300 miles over a road that a wagon could barely traverse. Other supplies were packed in by mule from Scottsburg, over 100 miles away.

Bill liked to tell of the resourcefulness of his father. In 1855 Bill accompanied him to Scottsburg to get provisions. When the ship came in from San Francisco, there was a general rush for the precious staples aboard. Bill's father was lucky and bought 100 pounds of potatoes at eight cents per pound. He then cut all the eyes from the potatoes, carefully stored the eyes on the mule's back, and went into the hotel and sold the potatoes —minus eyes—for what he had paid for them. Bill said they planted the eyes the next spring and had a fine crop of potatoes.

Bill's father was provident in many ways. Within ten days from the time he took his donation land claim, a snug log cabin with a stick and mud chimney was ready for occupancy. The family arrived in late autumn and it was necessary to house the father and mother, one daughter of sixteen, twin sons eighteen, and young Bill, who had had his twelfth birthday on the trail. Oregon's winter rains were soon upon them, but a good sturdy roof was over their heads.

During the remainder of 1854 and most of 1855, Bill was kept busy with chop-

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The Gold Hill Hotel in 1900, after the Southern Pacific came through.

ping down trees to enlarge the house and getting fences built for the cattle. He also heard spine-jarring stories of the atrocities of the Rogue River Indians of the area, and he became acquainted with some of the Indians who were willing to try to live in peace with the new settlers and miners.

Bill spent as much time as possible listening to Mike Bushey, a scout for the volunteer soldiers in the area. Considering his age it does not seem possible that Bill did much fighting but he did say in an interview in the 1920s, "I served as a scout in the Rogue River War in 1855-56. I served under Mike Bushey. He was one of the best scouts that ever followed an Indian trail. He was tall and strong and had long black hair. When he wanted to get information, he would let his hair down . . . put a blanket over his shoulders, put on his moccasins and walk through the camp. . . .

"After an attack Indians would scatter to the top of some butte. For miles around the Indians that had scattered like a covey of quail would begin signalling to one another. The way they did it was for an Indian to set fire to a handful of pine needles to make a smudge, and then stamp it out with his moccasin. We would see the puffs of smoke gather closer and closer till pretty soon the Indians had reassembled. I learned scouting from Bushey, and I was considered a good scout."

THE INDIANS became more and more troublesome during the fall of 1855 and there were many reprehensible acts on both sides. It was agreed among most of the settlers that the Rogues would have to be eradicated or put on reservations. By January 1856 almost all the homes in the area were either forted up or the occupants had moved into the homes of their neighbors who were forted up. Fear ran abroad in the valleys of Southern Oregon, and Bill Hay's family home became a fort. It was named Fort Hay. His father and one of his brothers are listed on the muster rolls of the volunteers of 1855 and 1856.

One incident is recorded in which Bill Hay did engage in a battle—or rout. One day in March 1856, Bill was coming home on the narrow trail from Long's Crossing. There were five men with him. One was the owner of the ferry at the crossing and some were volunteer sol-

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Mining near Gold Hill, Oregon in 1900.

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Mollie Thumm

(Continued from page 31)

and free-flowing gold that rivaled the night-life glory of San Francisco. Its fame and fortune had declined but not disappeared. Klondike Kate made a nostalgic return engagement after her big season of fame and heartbreak, and danced in $1,500 Paris gowns. Pantages, the ruthless showman had taken her money and "done her wrong" but she met a miner there who had been quietly in love with her for a long time and whom she would marry years later.

"How could Dawson die with Robert Service living in a cabin on the edge of town and writing about the Gold Rush Days—words that would bring him fame and fortune and make him the most popular writer in America next to Eddie Guest," Mollie said. "He was a strange quiet man, who wandered at night searching for all the old ghosts, but he sometimes came to town flashing his checks, giving everyone free beer and dancing with the young schoolmarms at socials.

"Henry was glad to see me but I think he was worried how I would take to the new life. We stayed in town long enough to gather necessary things and to rest a bit. I wouldn't have minded living in Dawson, but Henry was mining in Alaskan Territory on tributaries of the Yukon and I had made up my mind to be with him."

From then on Mollie's life was spent in the Tanana and Nenana area, in cabins on Doric Creek, Joe Bush Creek, and Boston Ditch. She traveled by riverboat, horse and sled, or cart and sometimes by dog sled, though Henry didn't keep dogs. Her trips to Dawson were few and far between. Henry was a tireless man, determined to wash the last glitter out of the creek and river gravel. He wrested pay dirt where less patient men would have given up.

Mollie was always at his side at the sluice box or wood cutting. She hunted for huckleberries, raspberries and bush cranberries for pies and drying. She took a gun out for small game; put up curtains, and made covers for the homemade furniture. When the weather was cooperative she drove their horse to the boat landing for mail.

"Winters were the worst," Mollie admitted. "They were long and we were often isolated. I made paper flowers and put them all over the cabin. Henry laughed at me but I could tell he liked them. We played cribbage and read and re-read letters and books—I often read aloud—and I wrote letters to go out in the spring. The wolves howled close at night and we had to guard our frozen moose meat.

"We were anxious over the slightest illness and battled the grippe and digestive upsets with pills and home remedies. I made pies out of almost anything before winter was over—crackers soaked in canned juice baked in a crust. When we had to share food with someone less provident we ran pretty close, if it was a long winter."

SUMMERS were better for the miners than winter except for the mosquitoes that could drive one almost mad with their persistent sting. "Lots of folks feared them more than the wild animals," Mollie said. "Mosquito netting was as important as food.

"In the summer we would get together with other miners and the few wives among us, and show off our cooking and wear our best clothes. We'd sing and recite poetry and give readings—often things we'd written ourselves—and the women would target shoot with the men like on the Fourth of July.

"These were happy times," Mollie remembered wistfully, "but other times were not so pleasant with a crazed miner or a rampaging bear to watch for, or a wolf trailing your supply sled or cart. There were accidents and the fear of waiting alone for your husband's return. Next to distressed humans, an angry moose could strike the most terror, but most of the smaller animals were interesting to watch as were the various song and game birds. Ducks were so plentiful we tired quickly of eating them.

"Henry kept as close to the cabin as possible and stayed as long with a wash as he could. There was always excitement with the break up of the river ice in spring and the first winter-trapped boat to make it through. Everyone liked to bet on the thaw date—sometimes the boats couldn't make it back to headquarters before they were iced in. There was beauty in the snow fields, the midnight sun, and the myriad flowers in spring and summer—but it was lonely."

It was Henry's health that finally took them out and the fact that he had gleaned enough by sheer labor to keep them in comfort for the rest of their days. "Neither of us would admit openly that Henry's strength was failing," Mollie said.

"We chose the new irrigation project at White Bluffs on the Columbia for our new home. Henry had loved the Yukon and now he had a grand view of the Columbia, building our house high on a cliff above."

But even so, with a short revival of energy Henry had to make one trip back to the Yukon, leaving Mollie to look after the new house, but it was only a brief visit. He was ready to stay in Washington for good.

It was there on the banks of the Columbia that I met Mollie Thumm, a comely white-haired lady living in memories, but also much interested in the present. She was a kindly neighbor to those around her. White Bluffs had been a well known ferry crossing—it still was. It had been frequented by Hudson's Bay men, soldiers, cattlemen and settlers. Blanch and Lorenzo Perkins had crossed the ferry shortly before being murdered by Indians during the Paiute War of 1878. The location was redolent with history. An ancient log cabin sat on each side of the river in contrast to modern buildings.

The year I met Mollie one of the biggest boat races in the state was held on the river in front of her home. Henry had been gone five years. He had spent his last days reminiscing about the Yukon and watching the changing seasons on the Columbia.

"I have to think they were happy years. He had a long illness but it was not all painful," Mollie said, her eyes bright with tears. "I read to him—Jack London, Robert Service, Rex Beach—all those authors who lived and wrote in the North. We took a Dawson paper. Sometimes his mind wandered and he seemed to think he was back on the Yukon again. He was a miner until the day he died."

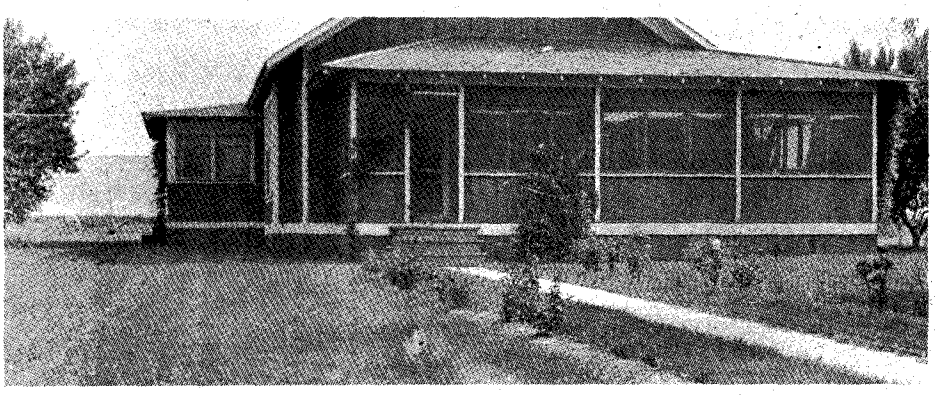
Mollie never forgot the wives she left back in the Northland; she spent a great deal of time mailing packages and writing letters to them until all she knew had passed on or moved away.

"We were a breed all by ourselves," she said. "No one else quite understood what we went through or what we needed."

Mollie stayed on in her pleasant home until she was ousted almost overnight by the Hanford Atomic Project. The picturesque orchards and pleasant homes of the little settlement disappeared to make room for the towers of annihilation.

Mollie died in 1947 in Yakima, Washington, leaving no kin, and to me she bequeathed her collection of pictures taken along the Yukon. There was about one inch of death notice in the Yakima paper—probably whatever was required by law.

The home Henry and Mollie built at White Bluffs, on the Columbia River. It is now part of the atomic energy project located in that area.



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Legendary Tom Threepersons

(Continued from page 17)

Mounties dashed for cover they sighted all three of the smugglers some forty yards ahead.

"I had been taught by my father to drop to my belly before shooting, and I did." Tom recalled. Bill, in the excitement, foolishly stood up to fire. Almost instantly a bullet slammed into his chest. Tom, shocked, and blind with anger at the grim sight of his friend lying helpless in the snow, stood erect and fired. His point-blank range caught one of the bandits, killing him. The other two men, frightened at the onslaught, fled and instantly disappeared in the snow-dimmed distance.

The young Cherokee, suddenly weak-kneed, gathered his stricken friend in trembling arms and begged him to say he was all right, but moments passed with no sound except the whispering wind. Then Bill spoke, "Do not go on, Tom," he said slowly. They will ambush you. It is two to one and you haven't a chance. Promise me you will go back."

"No!" the word fairly exploded from Tom; then he lowered his voice and said more quietly, "No one can do this to you and get away with it. I would always see myself as a coward. I cannot promise, old friend."

Bill's breathing became more labored. When he roused now and again it was always to beg Tom to turn back. Finally after a long silence, he died. It was some time before Tom Threepersons was calm enough to look for a burial place for the young man who had so long been his companion.

Close by was an old abandoned cabin and on its protected side Tom scooped out a shallow grave and laid his friend to rest. The sorrowful task finished, the young Cherokee stood by the mound that held Bill and swore to find the murderers even if it cost his life. Then he stored Bill's belongings in the cabin, and set out on another perilous trail.

IT WAS rough and lonely going through the desolate country. The very stillness was oppressive and it was cold, so cold. All the cunning and wisdom of his forebears rose to Tom's aid, though the danger of ambush was ever present. "Being an Indian," Tom later stated, "I was afraid to be afraid."

He was on the trail for a week before he was sure where the men he sought were headed. High in the hills where the Yukon begins to be a river, was a little settlement called End of the Trail. It was literally that. Peopled by the roughest kind of traders, gold seekers, gamblers, smugglers and white slavers, the dangerous and evil End of the Trail was a logical hideout for the men Tom was trailing, and all signs indicated that they were headed in that direction.

The young Mountie pushed on for another eleven days. By then he was physically exhausted and suffering terribly from hunger. It was with a sigh of relief that he saw the cabin of an old trapper he had once befriended. Tom rested for two weeks before he felt strong enough for the ordeal that lay ahead.

From his trapper friend he learned the men he sought had a cabin high in the hills. The old man also supplied him with information on the smugglers' comings and goings.

One morning, as the early sun glistened on the snow, Tom felt that the time for a showdown had come. He cleaned and oiled his two pistols and rifle, checked his ammunition and ate a good breakfast. Bidding his friend goodbye he set off for the cabin of the men who had murdered Bill and his father.

Unobserved he crept within shouting distance of the cabin and crouched down behind a huge rock to wait for the smugglers to appear. To calm his nerves Tom bit off a huge chew of tobacco and worked on it for quite awhile. At last his hands became steady, his heart slowed its racing, he was ready for anything.

Soon the two men rode up, darting uneasy glances at every shrub and shadow. They froze for a second when the young Indian rose from behind the rock.

"I am a police officer! Hands up!" Tom commanded. Those words jolted the men into action. They quickly dismounted and scurried for cover, shooting as they ran. Tom fired, killing one. The other one blazed away, his bullet sending the Mountie's white Stetson high in the air. Tom shot him dead too. Suddenly it was all over.

In the silence that followed, a whiskey jack winged away, startled out of his jay-boldness. Tom stood for a long moment staring at the bodies. Then he whispered, "Bill, oh Bill." And he wept again, bitterly.

The shooting had been heard in End of the Trail and men came on the run, guns drawn. They were stopped, however, by the old trader who vouched for Tom, explaining he was a Northwest Mounted Policeman. Convinced, the men took Tom back to the settlement and proceeded to have a celebration. In their eyes the big Cherokee was a hero—but for a strange reason. Many officers had come to the End of the Trail but Tom was only the second to come out alive!

A FEW DAYS later Tom Threepersons reported back to headquarters at Calgary, informing officials of the circumstances surrounding Bill's death. He requested his friend's body be brought back from its bleak resting place in the Yukon for burial in Calgary.

One of the hardest things Tom ever had to do was to break the news to Mrs. White. "I started over to her house six times," he recalled, "and each time I turned back before I got to the house. My brother John finally went over and talked to her. Later she came to see me and we talked about it and I told her the police would bring Bill's body back to Calgary. She had been like a mother to me and I felt so sorry about the whole terrible affair."

Months of routine service with the Mounties followed for Tom. His new partner was a quick-draw artist, constantly trying to increase his speed in flipping the gun from the holster. Tom was no mean shot either. He once stepped off twenty yards, set up empty cartridges, then returned and shot them all down without a miss. The partners could be classed as a pair of Dead-Eye Dicks.

One night while on patrol duty in Medicine Hat, the two officers noticed some suspicious action around a bank. Forcing a door, they entered cautiously and were greeted by gunfire. Flashes from the guns were their only targets in the darkened building. It is said that Tom killed three of the bandits and had the other two covered before the quick-draw artist could get into action. The Cherokee also captured a .30-30 Winchester that was to become his constant companion.

But serving with the Mounties without Bill could never be the same, and Tom grew homesick for life on the ranch. He resigned and returned to Alberta.

After a while that, too, palled and his restless spirit turned to the rodeo circuit. Tom's love of horses and his skill in handling them won him the title of World's Best All Around Champion Cowboy in Pendleton, Oregon in 1912.

Flushed with the victory of the championship and with the prize money burning holes in his pockets, Tom decided to take a round-the-world trip. He was gone eleven months and touched base in Argentina, Europe and Asia.

Tom Threepersons returned home flat broke and not at all impressed by what he had seen. "Nobody talked the way I did," he recalled with a grin, "or wore the clothes I wore or ate the food I wanted."

At twenty-three years of age, Tom was tall and handsome. He had coal-black hair, sometimes worn long, black-brown eyes, reddish-tan complexion and a shy smile that showed flashing white teeth. His cheekbones were not as high, and the Roman nose of the Cherokee tribe was not quite so pronounced. He loved to wear well-cut Western clothes and cowboy boots, and to top it all with a white ten-gallon Stetson. You can bet the people who saw the big Indian on his world tour were very much impressed with him.

Tom was never again called upon to avenge the death of a friend or family member. In his many years of service to whatever cause in which he took part, however, he performed his duty with the same dedication of purpose—he carried on with a vengeance!

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In March 1916 Mexican Villistas raided Columbus, New Mexico. Soldiers and citizens were killed and the little town sacked. The raiders then disappeared into Mexico. General John Pershing was given the task of leading a Punitive Expedition to capture Pancho Villa, believed to be responsible for the raid. Tom Threepersons volunteered as an intelligence scout. The expedition was a failure, for Villa was never even seen, but it was good training for American soldiers with a World War drawing ever closer.

In 1917 Tom enlisted in Douglas, Arizona. The army failed to put to use his superb marksmanship; instead he was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, breaking horses for the remount squad. Tom said his only excitement during his entire service was being kicked in the head by a horse he was breaking. The injury was not serious.

After the war was over, Tom settled in El Paso where he was a member of the police force for many years. He walked a beat in dark and dangerous Little Chihuahua, the town's Mexican settlement, narrowly escaping death several times. He served as city detective and deputy sheriff. During Prohibition he was a federal officer. He was so feared by rumrunners they put a $10,000 price on his head. Often when criminals knew he was on their trail they left town on the first train out. A free soul, Tom refused to wear any kind of uniform. He could always be seen in a business suit with white shirt and black string tie, topped by the white Stetson.

IN 1923 Tom went back to his first love, ranching, becoming foreman of several large spreads. The largest and perhaps the most challenging was the Cudahy ranch in Durango, Mexico with its 15,000 head of cattle.

Systematic rustling was decimating the herd, yet for some reason Tom was the only person on the ranch allowed to wear and use a gun; seldom a day passed that he was not fired upon. This one-sided affair was irksome, and Tom quit.

On the way to El Paso he heard the drumming of horses' hoofs behind him. It was some rustlers in hot pursuit. Tom was chased all the way to the Customs House on the border. He barely escaped with his life.

In 1925 Tom married a lovely Cherokee girl, Lorene Tritthart. She held a major in art and education and wrote for the El Paso *Times* and later the Silver City *Press* in New Mexico. She always signed her writing with drawings of three small persons.

In later years Tom and his wife moved to Safford, Arizona where he became a rancher. In 1969 he died of pneumonia at the age of seventy-nine. Lorene preceded him in death.

No one ever took the place of Bill White in Tom's life. He often remarked, "When the moon shines brightly like it did those nights during that hunt through Alaska . . . and especially when the air is clear and cold I think of Bill. And I remember the times we used to play together and work together and fight together and I miss him."

Tom Threepersons was a man of great courage and made a formidable enemy. Friends said that when he was hunting criminals he came on like "three persons," just like a young army. He neither hunted trouble nor sidestepped it. He would not speak of the men he had killed and would not admit to keeping count. He was wounded five times during his service as police officer. One time he nearly died of blood poisoning when he tried to treat the wound with tobacco poultices; yet these wounds did not keep him from getting back on the job as soon as he recovered.

Tom Threepersons was an "honest to God" American, a completely civilized and educated Cherokee Indian who will be remembered as a true figure of the Old West when a lawman's longevity was determined by the quality of his courage and his dexterity with a gun—when a man had to take up his own trail of vengeance.

Editor's note: Reading of Tom Threepersons again reminded us of an exchange of letters about him which we printed in *True West* back in 1957. Some of you may recall them.

Following a story about Wild Bill Hickok, we received a letter from Eugene Stagg of Floweree, Montana:

"Gents:

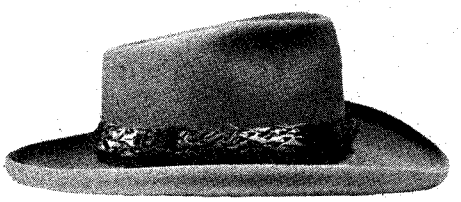
"You fellers have a great magazine. Keep up the great work—but keep that damned Will Bill Hickok out of TRUE WEST if you can. I'm getting sick and tired of hearing the name Hickok. Hickok! Hickok! Hickok, the Hero; I'd say Hickok, the Rat! Why don't you people quit talking as if Hickok was the greatest gunman of his time?

"Print something about a *real* gunman for a change; go look up Tom Threepersons. Tom was a much faster and more accurate gunslinger than Hickok ever was. He was a marshal in the Southwest; a half-breed Indian and a really decent human being, which Hickok was not.

"Hickok would try to get an advantage over men he fought; Tom Threepersons would invariably give an opponent the best break he could. Tom would let his opponent draw first, then he would draw so fast that he would have his gun out, cocked and ready to fire before the other man had cleared leather. If his opponent continued to draw, Tom would shoot so as to cripple him; if not, that ended the episode insofar as Tom was concerned. He was not only the best gunfighter of his era, but a humane and upright person. You don't often find that combination in the same man.

"Well, that's enough about Tom Threepersons, but I hope you guys get the point and print the stories of men who did something for this country instead of for their own personal gain, as did Hickok the Heel."—Eugene Stagg.

Shortly after that letter was printed, a reply came in—the first and last correspondence we ever had from this man who so symbolized the low-key, competent invincibility we associate with the Western lawman, though many of them fell short.



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"Dear Editor:

"Through the columns of your magazine I would like to express my deep appreciation to Eugene Stagg, of Floweree, Montana, for his complimentary letter in my behalf. As a law officer, I greatly appreciate it.

"But first I would like to correct the statement that I am a half-breed Indian. I am not a half-breed, but a full-blooded Indian of the Cherokee tribe of Oklahoma, and naturally very proud of my heritage as a First American.

"And please let me tell you that I have never had any desire to be placed in a class with Wild Bill Hickok, Billy the Kid, or any of the so-called Western bad men. My desire was and still is to be classed as a respectable officer of the law and its enforcement. I did my duty to the best of my ability, as I was sworn to do, and that was all. I can truthfully say I never took advantage of any man that was under my protection, but treated him as my equal, as no man is guilty until he is proven so, and I was not the judge and jury.

"I am proud of my record as a peace officer in the Southwest and along the border where I was a civilian officer. I also had a number of jobs with the Federal Government: Internal Revenue Agent, U. S. Mounted Customs Inspector, and Intelligence Officer.

"I served my hitch in World War I, volunteering at the first call for volunteers, and I was honorably discharged at the close of the war. I tried hard to enlist for World War II.

"At present I live near Silver City, New Mexico—the Sunshine State and Land of Mañana, a beautiful country.—Tom Threepersons (Retired), Silver City, New Mexico.

The Earps in Tonopah

(Continued from page 15)

striking it rich as we do here."

The proof of my remark lies in the discovery of Goldfield just a few miles south of Tonopah. That discovery had already been made (unbeknownst to us then). That section of Nevada was already alive with prospectors. Two twenty-year-old boys inspired by Jim Butler's luck in discovering Tonopah, had set out to discover their own bonanza. How successful they were is testified to by Goldfield's remarkable record since then.

We actually only spent a few months around Tonopah itself though they were busy enough months to have filled a few years of most lives. Wyatt heeded my urging; as a result we were again to set out on the trail.

He sold our light team and wagon and one team of the heavier horses to Mr. Oddie. We kept the large wagon and one heavy team for our use. We would not be loading it so heavily that one heavy team couldn't handle it.

That country wasn't as empty and lonely then as it is today, I'll wager. Then there was never a day we didn't encounter others hoping that Nevada's hills would be their Golconda. They eventually made strikes that led to the founding of such towns as Goldfield, Rhyolite, Bullfrog, Fairview, Rawhide and many others. Some of the old mines had been operating intermittently since the heyday of the Comstock Lode forty years before. These seemed to take on new life from the example of the fresh discoveries. Some of these that come readily to mind were Manhattan, Austin, and Silver Peak. They had been ghost towns. Some are once more today the home of the coyote and owl, haunted by golden memories of an optimistic horde who came to strive and conquer. Few did—but who, among those who lived it, can doubt that most of the others were amply paid in a different coin? We were.

We dropped in for a short while on Goldfield in its earliest development stages. Later, we stopped there again at the time Virgil [Earp] and his wife were there. Poor Virgil died of pneumonia. He tried to do too much for a man crippled in one arm. He probably tried to conceal from himself the knowledge that he was handicapped by trying to show that it made no difference. In any event he strained himself too soon after a siege of pneumonia and came down with it a second time in the fall of 1905. His wife sent his body to Portland, Oregon for burial at the home of a daughter from his first marriage. I'm getting ahead of my story, but I never think of Goldfield without thinking of poor jolly Virge who died years before he should have. He was only sixty-two.

WE ONLY stayed in Goldfield briefly the first time. We again found friends who urged Wyatt to remain and go into business. By then, however, he was thoroughly taken with the prospecting business. It took small urging from me to get him to move on.

Our prospecting days were well planned and we worked systematically. After all it had become our business and we treated it with the respect due a profession. This beat the boring retirement so many people lapsed into when they had only a "play hobby" to occupy them.

There were times when we felt sure for a few hours that we had found our bonanza. We would hurry to camp with some samples of likely looking ore. One of us would break off some pieces and feverishly pound them up into powder in the mortar. Anxiously we would pan the result in our horn spoon, washing it with a little water till only the heaviest residue was left. Then came the tense moment of examining it for "color." Sometimes there was a small showing of gold, most often nothing. Our spirits would sink again.

When there was enough color to keep up our hopes we would head for the nearest assay office to have the value estimated in dollars per ton of ore.

We wandered many miles and worked on our prospecting most days till the days became weeks that finally stretched into many months without finding anything worth developing. But many individuals plodded tirelessly among the West's mountains threading canyons and testing the rocks with a pick, until the weeks and months slipped by to become a lifetime—and found nothing!

We knew this before we started. Diligence, patience, perseverance were needed in seeking the treasures the earth enfolds. Those and a sufficient knowledge of geology to recognize likely places to look, though the old saying has often proven true: "Gold is where you find it!"

After awhile we found our way to Silver Peak. We camped there for awhile to rest ourselves and the horses. Actually, we'd been having a harder time of it than the horses.

We camped in the shelter of an old broken down adobe house, a relic of the town's long-ago boom days. Fall had overtaken us. A nip was in the night air, making a large cheery fire of mesquite or ironwood welcome. Wyatt was turning over in his mind the notion of leaving Nevada for the winter. He pointed out that there was as much wilderness farther south, and warmer, with equal mineral prospects.

The country along the Colorado River in San Bernardino County attracted him. I didn't care where we went as long as it was out in the wilderness and didn't involve a return to business. I could see, too, that he was growing tired of chasing the will-o'-the wisp of precious metal without something to show for it. As for ranching prospects, he had seen nothing in Nevada that appealed to him; at least nothing that was available.

One morning as we were preparing breakfast inside our adobe shell, we heard horses pull up outside with some sort of rig. Wyatt went out to see who our visitors were. I heard someone greet him by name, so knew they were not strangers. It turned out to be Tasker Oddie. With him was John Hays Hammond, a world renowned mining engineer that Wyatt had known in Tombstone. Mr. Hammond had recently returned from South Africa. There he had worked as a consulting engineer for Cecil Rhodes and others in opening the gold fields of that region. He had been in Nevada some time studying its mineral possibilities.

"What are you doing out here?" Mr. Hammond asked Wyatt.

"Prospecting, I guess you'd call it," Wyatt replied. "We've been out largely for our health—as far as finding anything goes."

"If I were prospecting," Mr. Oddie contributed, "I'd go to the Palmetto Range." He pointed to a distant set of mountain peaks.

Wyatt took a reflective puff on his pipe, then put his foot on the wheel hub, elbow on knee and replied "I'm giving prospecting up."

In dismay, I almost spontaneously said something I shouldn't have. We hadn't talked of giving it up—only of going where it was warmer.

I was relieved to hear him go on and say, "No more prospecting for the present. It's getting too cold. We'll probably sell out everything and spend the winter on the coast." That was better. It was sad to realize that our idyll was over for the time being, but at least the door was open for other years.

But fate, as is often the case, had other plans in store for us. We weren't to quit just yet. Lady Fortune had decided to smile briefly.

(Continued on page 44)

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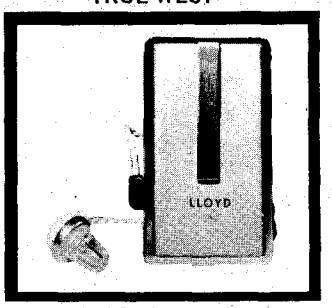

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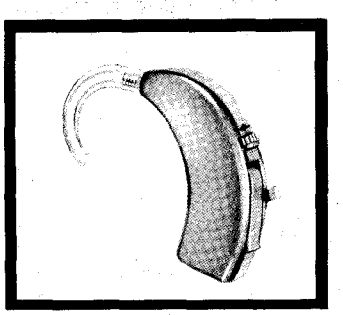

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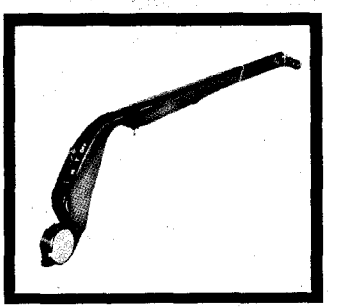

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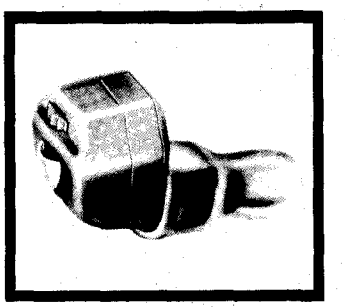

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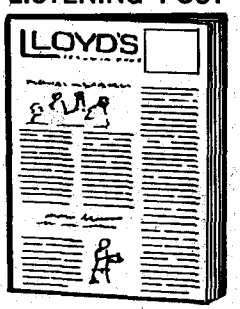

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Wild Old Days!

THE BEAR AT THE TACOMA HOTEL

By J. A. Eckrom

HOTELS in the Old West were faced with many unusual situations, but one in Tacoma, Washington encountered a problem which may have been unique. It had to contend with an 800-pound drunken bear named Jack.

Jack was only a cub when a hunter in Sumner presented him to W. G. Rowland, who then passed him on to the Tacoma Hotel. Jack seemed like a friendly fellow and the hotel employes adopted him as a sort of oversized mascot. They built him a large pen at the edge of the bluff and bordering on the hotel veranda.

Jack took well to captivity, and even when full grown he was quite tame. So harmless was he, in fact, that the chain which secured the bear to a high stump in the middle of the enclosure was made long enough for him to climb over the walls of the pen and lounge on the grass outside. No one even became excited when he occasionally slipped his collar and went off exploring.

Jack became famous for his little excursions. Once he entered a nearby store and helped himself to a barrel of sugar, but his favorite target was the hotel bar. Somewhere Jack had developed a taste for beer and he had learned to hold a mug between his huge clumsy paws. Usually he would guzzle peacefully until his keeper came to lead him back to the pen.

Only once did Jack display dangerous hostility. A hotel workman pushing wheelbarrow-loads of cinders from the boiler room decided to have some fun with the bear. He repeatedly pushed the wheelbarrow at Jack, shouting "Boo," and then drawing it back. Later, as the man was dumping a load of cinders over the bluff, the enraged bear crept up behind him and sent both the practical joker and the wheelbarrow tumbling over the edge. The workman was nearly killed, and forever after the huge animal detested anything with wheels.

Jack's career came to an abrupt and unhappy end on the night of March 17, 1892. He got loose sometime around two in the morning and lumbered out into the street. A bellboy managed to head him off a few blocks from the hotel and get him turned in the direction of home.

Jack started back toward the hotel, but unfortunately he met up with policeman Mart Kenna. Officer Kenna was near the Commercial Bank when the 800-pound monster came toward him out of the darkness. He fired two quick shots. One bullet missed entirely, the other entered Jack's side and passed most of the way through his body.

Jack was coaxed back to the hotel and spent the next day moaning pitifully as he sat in his water tub. The hotel people called a surgeon, but Jack was in no mood to be examined. In the end there was nothing to do but to take a gun and put an end to his misery.

After the taxidermist Fred Edwards had removed Jack's hide, someone suggested that he could be served to the hotel guests. "We do not eat our friends here," replied an indignant hotel spokesman. The bear meat was later served at a barbecue elsewhere in the city.

Jack's stuffed and mounted form stood guard in a corridor of the hotel for many years after his death. Eventually he was given to the nearby Ferry Museum. Then, in one of the frequent reshufflings of exhibits, the curator lost track of him. Jack's present whereabouts are unknown.

Tacoma's pet bear.

Photo Courtesy Author

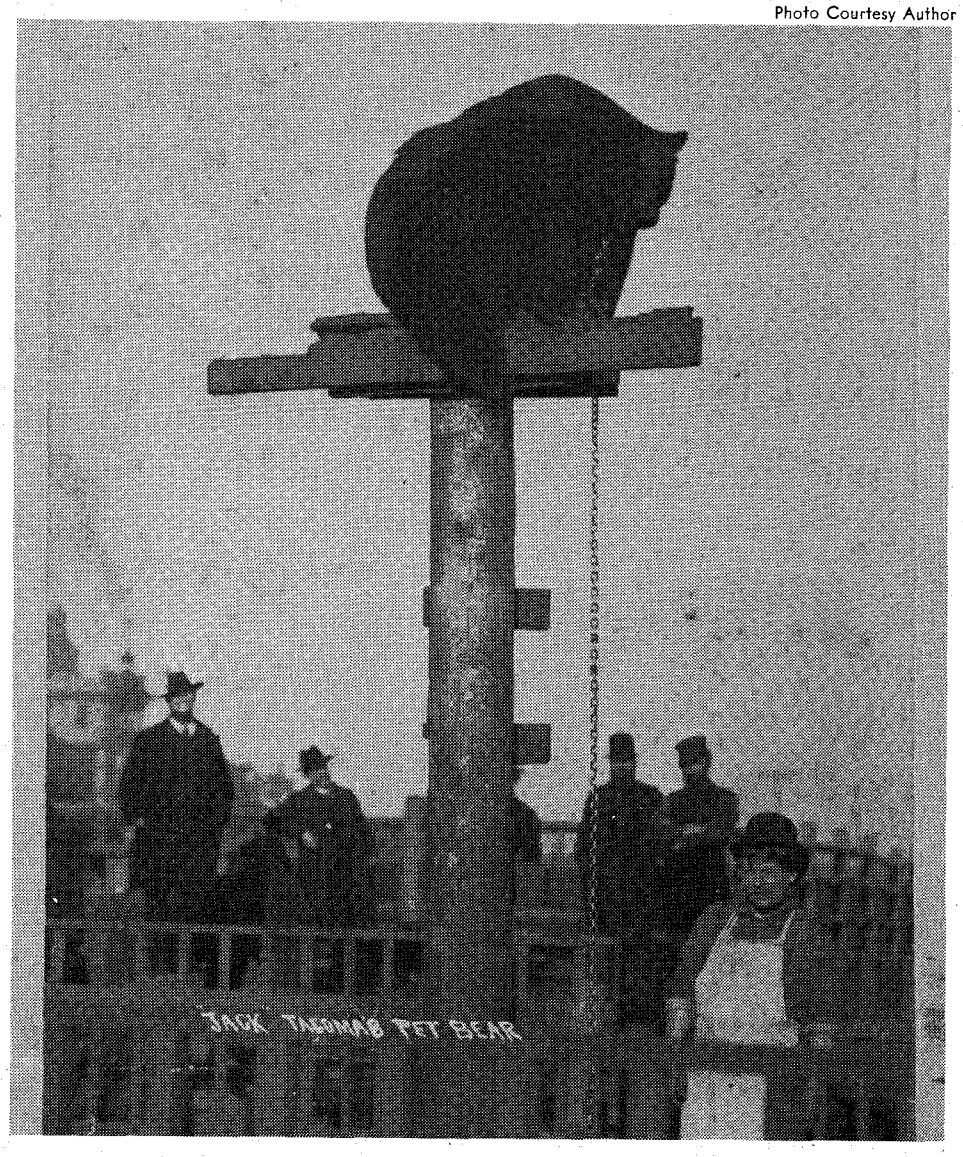

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Photo Courtesy Author

This is the way many telephone offices looked back in the days when folks who used the telephone called "Central" by her first name.

ONE SHORT; TWO LONGS

By Don Buchan

WHEN ranches were isolated and water was pumped by hand, kerosene lamps provided a flickering light, and the only fast means of communication was by horseback, people had to have considerable luck to make it from one year to the next.

A broken leg or being gored by a bull could end in tragedy. An accidental gunshot wound, without medical aid, could also be fatal. The victim could look forward to be loaded in a spring wagon on some blankets and transported twenty to sixty miles over jolting trails to a physician.

Then came the telephone. Wires had to be strung for miles across uninhabited country in many instances, but a telephone kept an otherwise remote family in touch with the world. This marvelous new contraption hung on the wall, just waiting to save the day.

The receiver was lifted out of its cradle and held in the left hand while the right gave the crank on the side a vigorous turning. The "Hello Girl" or "Central," as she was called by strangers, was addressed by her first name by local folks.

A conversation often went something like this. "Is that you, Mayme? (Or Bess or Vi or Myrt.) Say, will you see if you can get Old Man Smith on the line? Some of his cattle have strayed onto my graze and I'd like to have the old coot come and drive them home."

When the conversation was completed, the receiver was replaced in the cradle and the crank given a short turn. That informed Central that she could disconnect.

A "general" ring, usually five "shorts," alerted everyone on the line to listen in. A grange meeting might be announced or an itinerant merchant might holler, "Say, this is Nels Olson, the potato man. I've got a carload of Early Ohios on the track and I've got to unload them right away. Bring your own gunny sacks and haul them away for fifty cents a hundred. Potatoes are going 'way up, folks, so stock up now."

Local merchants often took advantage of the small charge for a general ring to announce a carload of peaches, or a ton of frozen fish direct from the Great Lakes.

No one ever "spoke" over the telephone at first. They hollered— and the greater the distance, the louder. A story made the rounds about a rancher who had never used a telephone. He was encouraged to talk from the general store to his wife who was visiting a friend before they headed back home. The call was placed for the rancher and he was then handed the receiver and told to speak to his wife.

The man gingerly put the instrument against his ear and shouted into the mouthpiece, "That you, Rachel? That you?" Just then a bolt of lightning struck and he was knocked flat on his back. He looked up from the floor and gasped, "That's her, all right!"

CENTRAL was a friend in need. She would know where the doctor was and could make a close estimate of the time he'd be at a home that did not have a telephone. "He's out at the Lazy K," she might say. "Old Man Brown has one of his bellyaches. Don't expect Doc to be there mor'n a few minutes. Mrs. White called and said her baby's about due, so he'll go there next. She's got a phone and I'll call Doc there. What's your trouble? I'd better tell him so's he'll know what to fetch out to your place."

And Central always knew how Mrs. Jones was doing after surgery in Rochester, Minnesota; whether the Olsons were selling their calves or whether the sale was postponed because of bad weather. She knew when the box social would be held and all about the barn dance. She knew when the Balbraiths had relatives visiting, and how the chickens were laying for Mrs. Green.

Each telephone had an individual ring —a code—a number of shorts and longs.

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Of course, no matter whose code was rung, neighbors might lift the receiver and "rubber in." This was so taken for granted that occasionally a listener would enter into the conversation. It was expected and few objected. Only when reception got too weak with so many on the line would the legitimate caller plaintively beg, "Hang up, some of you. There's so many on the line I can't hear."

Long distance calls were rare in the early days. One such call, made in Iowa from Spencer to Terril, a small town twenty miles to the northeast, set a record for more than two decades as likely the most expensive telephone call ever placed in those parts.

It was in 1906. E. W. Harman, a horse buyer, was in Knox Walters' livery barn in Spencer and wanted to place a call to a man in Terril. The operator asked him to come to the office as there would be a twenty-five cent fee. At that moment, according to the girl, Knox Walters got on the wire and said *he* would pay the charge.

The call was completed but later, when Walters was presented with the twenty-five cent bill, he refused to pay. The telephone company sued and Walters appeared before Justice of the Peace Patterson in Spencer. A change of venue was granted to the nearest other justice of the peace, L. L. Atwood of Meadow Township.

Delays and continuances dragged the case on and on until the operator married and moved to Kentucky. In January 1907, all parties to the suit signified willingness to have the case tried. To everyone's surprise the young lady was returned from Kentucky to testify. Knox Walters lost the suit and had to pay not only the twenty-five cents, but costs of $114.85.

It's mighty convenient to direct-dial someone nowadays, but some of us old-timers miss the warm and cheerful voice of the operator. We recall our chats with Myrt or Mayme or Bessie, who was always a friend, a confidante—and sometimes the means of saving a life. They sure took a lot of the dread out of something going wrong back when we lived miles from nowhere.

JEFF DURFEY, BUFFALO HUNTER

By Emmett W. Burke

A buffalo herd estimated at forty miles wide and stretching as far as the eye could see, shook the Kansas prairie as it thundered toward the Solomon River in Osborne County. The river, a foot deep and twenty-five feet wide, disappeared as the herd quenched its thirst.

That was a century ago. The main inhabitants of the Kansas prairies, sometimes flat, sometimes rolling for hundreds of miles toward the Rock Mountains, were Indian and buffalo. Only a slow trickle of pioneers had entered this territory, scratching out a living and extending civilization slowly westward. One of them was Jeff Durfey.

Durfey's name doesn't always rate instant recognition, but he was a buffalo hunter of extraordinary ability who used the hides to further a successful career in wheat farming. And it was Durfey who gave an eye-witness account of the great buffalo herd that drank the Solomon dry.

Durfey, born in Columbus, Ohio on June 17, 1846, traveled with his parents to Wisconsin at the age of five. After service in the Civil War, Durfey came to Kansas, homesteading a claim on July 27, 1870 at Covert Creek, a claim which he retained until his death on January 30, 1931 at the age of eighty-four.

Durfey was married to Mary Burke in 1872. It was the first marriage in the county, and he took his bride to live in the house he had built nine miles south of the county seat. Built of oak logs, the house still stands.

Before turning to wheat, which made him one of the biggest landholders on the frontier, Durfey was a professional buffalo hunter. Hides brought him the money that paid for the first 160 acres he bought from the government. Wheat paid for the other 1,190 acres in his big spread. He kept books on the door of the log house and once wrote, "Wheat raised in 1910—4,836½ bushels."

The picturesque plainsman fondly recalled the days of his friendship with Buffalo Bill. He recalled that Buffalo Bill once rode nine miles across the Kansas plains to view a rifle that Durfey used to shoot buffalo.

"That was when Buffalo Bill was supplying the Kansas Pacific with buffalo meat," Durfey related. "I was shooting buffalo on the head of Walnut Creek. Bill had heard a good deal about what I was doing. He rode over to see what kind of rifle I was using.

"He supposed I had some new-fangled kind of gun and when he drove up he said, 'Jeff, I heard Dave Willis telling about you going after nine buffalo bulls and killing seven of them on the run. There's no man can do that with any kind of gun I've ever seen and, if you don't mind, I'd like to see your gun.'

"You ought to have seen his face when I handed him my rifle," Durfey continued. "It was an old government Springfield musket made over into a needle gun. I paid $25 for it in Solomon City [approximately ten miles west of Abilene, a frontier town which marked the end of the Chisholm Trail]. It was not so much the gun as the man behind the gun, I guess."

It was reported that Buffalo Bill, later interviewed in New York with his Wild West show, said that the best rifle shot he knew was Jeff Durfey of Kansas and added that Durfey was the only man who could beat him shooting buffalo.

DURFEY, who killed thousands of the shaggy beasts that once covered Kansas, was credited with kills of twenty to fifty a day.

"One day I killed fifty-six. I could have killed hundreds in a day, but we didn't waste cartridges on cows and small bulls. A bull hide was worth more than a cow hide, so we used to pick out only the biggest bulls.

"I had a way of my own. A herd of buffalo wouldn't stampede as long as the hunter kept out of sight, so I used to creep within good shooting distance and kill the biggest bull that always led the herd.

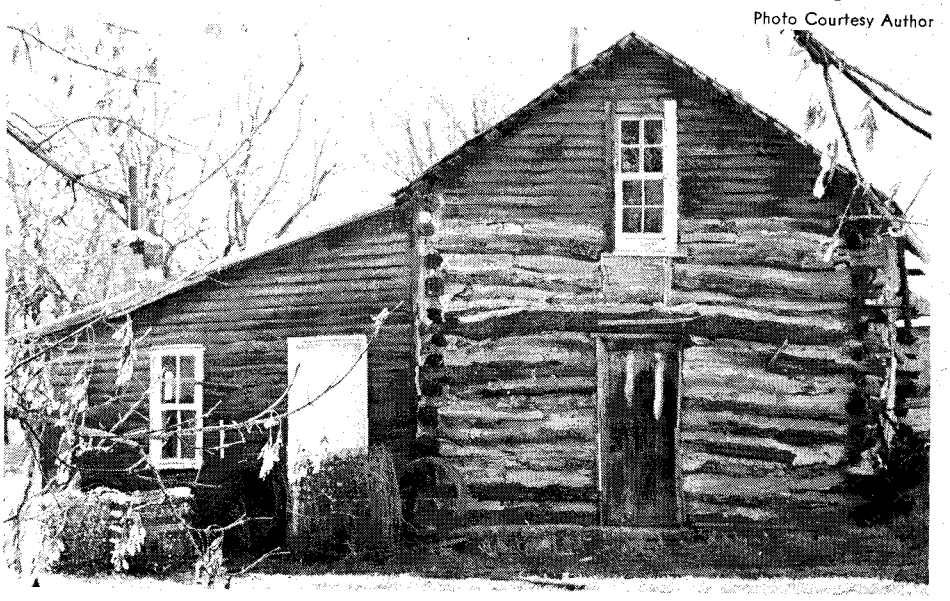
"The herd would become somewhat excited, but would soon settle down to grazing again and another bull would step out as the leader. I would shoot him and then the next one and so on until the herd finally became frightened away.

"In those days there were millions of buffalo on the plains. I once stood on the divide between the two Solomons [Rivers] and looked down on a solid mass of buffalo as far as the eye could see in all directions. The plain was black with them. That herd was forty miles wide and I don't know how long.

"I was camped once on the bank of Beaver Creek which was six feet wide and six inches deep, with swiftly running water. A buffalo herd came to the creek above our camp and drank it dry. For

The first house in Osborne County, Kansas, built by buffalo hunter Jeff Durfey.

Photo Courtesy Author



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hours the creek bed was dry until the great herd passed on.

"In 1872 a great herd of buffalo drank the Solomon River dry and water in it was twenty-five feet wide and a foot deep. When I first came to live here in the log cabin the buffalo herds used to stream past the cabin within ten feet of it, but I wouldn't shoot them because I didn't want the carcasses around in hot weather, and thousands of wild turkeys made better eating.

"I've seen 300 wild turkeys in one drove right here on my place. And beaver. The Solomon was full of them. The last buffalo I saw was in 1875, when a bunch of eight came across my place and I got two of them."

Ironically, wild turkey season only reopened in 1972 in Kansas, after the fowls' having been virtually wiped out, much like the buffalo.

Durfey took a dim view of Plains Indians as scrappers, saying they refused to fight. "A band of Sioux Indians followed me a whole day once," he said. "We were hunting 150 miles southwest of here when eight Sioux chased one of our men into camp. I went out onto the top of a knoll and signaled for them to come on. Three of them came toward me, and when they got within fifty yards they made friendly signs and laid down their guns.

"They went into camp with me and we fed them and I smoked a pipe with them. Three years later I was hunting 300 miles northwest of here and was out alone when I discovered a band of 13 Sioux sneaking up toward me.

"All day long they followed me and tried to sneak close enough to shoot me without danger to themselves, but each time I stood them off. At last I went to the top of a knoll and waved them all to come on.

"Finally one Indian rode out and came toward me, making friendly signs. When he got close enough he called me by name. He was one of the Sioux I had fed three years before. We sat down to have a palaver, and bye and bye I happened to look around and the whole band of twelve was creeping up on me.

"I got up and aimed my rifle at the head of the Indian with me and said, 'Signal them to halt or I'll kill you!' He waved, they stopped, and then I made him march off. That band of thirteen Sioux was afraid of my rifle and I took my time getting back to camp."

The Durfeys are buried in the Osborne cemetery, a replica of the old log cabin, done in marble, standing on the family burial plot.

The buffalo, except for small herds for show at various parks, are gone. So are the Indians. But the wheat, which did more for the pioneers than buffalo could ever have done, remains—thousands of acres that make the state one of the greatest grain-producing areas in the world.

I Asked For It . . . I Got It!

(Continued from page 7)

note to the store manager. Sign your name and address of course. It brings results if it's kept up long enough.

A surprising number wrote something to the effect that, "You're the publisher—it's your business to decide." Think a minute, folks. It is *not* my business to decide—I do not publish these magazines for myself. It wouldn't make sense, for instance, to print 200,000 copies of TRUE WEST and keep all of them for my personal enjoyment. If I stay in business, I must please the majority of people who read Western Americana. The only way I can find out about your tastes is to do exactly what I am doing here. Some of you want action-packed history—fast moving stories. Others are content with interesting history. I could go on into at least twelve different categories! However, right now I'd better tip my hat to the people who have been reading TRUE West since Volume 1, Number 1. I really made a miscalculation there! I thought there might be fifteen or twenty but I promised to print them all and here are a few more. I never dreamed there were so many charter readers still with us!

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SEE, I told you I wasn't long-winded. . . . The only way, it seems, that I can cut off is to run out of space, which I have just done—so the next and (I hope) last installment will be in the Fall OLD WEST. It should be on the newsstands by July 1. I am going to start out quoting paragraphs from letters and do nothing but *that* in OLD WEST. There are some hilarious, sincere, informative, interesting—in short, some letters that would make several very entertaining issues of TRUE WEST, FRONTIER TIMES and OLD WEST just by themselves!

Thanks for writing—if I can't answer your letters individually, I know you'll understand why. It would wear out my $2.98 dictating machine and my secretary Susan might have a nervous bustdown. See you later.—Joe "Hosstail" Small

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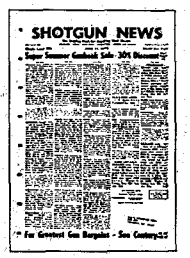

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The Earps in Tonopah

(Continued from page 38)

THE VISITORS, it happened, were not interested in having something to eat, having already had breakfast. By the time they left I had our departure plan all worked out in my mind. We would go to Keeler on the railroad by way of Piper's Ranch, leaving our kitty where we would know it had a good home. We would sell our outfit there and go by rail to Los Angeles.

A word here about the kitty. We always had pets. Tony, our white Spitz, went with us wherever we went. But cats don't care to be cooped up for traveling. This one was a stray we had adopted since coming to Silver Peak. Even so, we didn't intend to leave it without finding a good home for it somewhere. The Pipers had mentioned needing a cat when we had passed through, so we knew there'd be a home for her there. Cats were always good to have around a ranch to keep down the population of rats and mice.

We sold off our camping equipment except enough to see us through to the railroad. We kept our prospecting tools, the mattress, some bedding and a few utensils for cooking and eating. We even sold our bedsprings and stove for we expected to reach Keeler the evening of the second day of travel.

We planned to stay our first night at Piper's Ranch, but you can never be sure in desert travel. There was a ready demand for our camp supplies. Mr. Vollmer, the assayer at Silver Peak, bought them all.

As we set out, it was a cold day for October, patches of snow lying on the ground. As evening approached we were climbing toward the top of the divide between us and Piper's Ranch. My feet were getting numb with the cold.

"Let's wrap them in these gunny sacks," Wyatt suggested. He tied me up in them like a pair of mukluks, using baling wire. They didn't look like much but they were surprisingly warm.

I can remember even today, exactly what the country looked like there—the mind recalls what it associates with an unusual event. It was here that Midas favored us. There was a stretch of heavy sand for perhaps a quarter of a mile. My feet were growing cold again and I stamped my feet on the front of the wagon. I remember saying to Wyatt, "My feet are getting cold again. I think I'll get out and walk awhile."

"Good idea," Wyatt agreed. "It'll warm you up. I think I'll get down too. This is a pretty heavy pull for the horses."

When I got out, Wyatt stopped the horses for a breather. I trudged on in my makeshift mukluks. They were quite easy to walk in, even in the loose sand. I looked at the ochre barrens surrounding me—the purple of evening, like a tide from the aerial ocean, washing down from the zenith toward a horizon shoreline. Some would have called it desolate. It was like a lover to me—enfolding one with a sense of constancy and understanding. I was infinitely sad that we had to leave this—our real home—leave for awhile our dream of discovery. Our fortune was unrealized, not yet unearthed, but there was tomorrow and tomorrow.

MY EYES were almost unconsciously casting about for likely looking outcroppings. My spirit lifted at the thought that we might make the big strike anywhere. It was the feeling that lures the inveterate prospector forever onward over each new rise, into each new valley or canyon or gulch. It was in my blood, the love of prospecting; I was never to get it out. It is there today. If I had been a man, perhaps one day they would have found my lifeless body where I dropped beside my burro while toiling up some last gulch with a wondrous vision of a bonanza lying just over the next ridge.

Countless float rocks were all around me that day; who can say why I picked up one particular rock, but I did! It must even have been picked up from force of habit. I'm sure I had no particular thought that it showed signs of gold. But it was different. I can call to mind exactly the way it looked—round and brown, about the size of a peach. From the cracks a white frosty interior peeped out.

While I was waiting for Wyatt, I idly built a location monument of loose rocks. Looking around I fixed my bearings. It was a draw between two low hills.

When Wyatt overtook me he said, "You'd better get aboard now and we'll try to make time. I don't want to spend the night out here if we can keep from it."

I held up my rock for him to look at. "Look at the unusual looking rock I've found. Isn't it funny looking?"

Wyatt took it from my hand, glanced at it perfunctorily, then threw it away in disgust. "I'm through prospecting," he said. "I've had all of it I want."

Nonetheless, I retrieved the rock and stuffed it back in my pocket before I got in the wagon.

Wyatt often used to say the reason he did something was because, "I have a hunch."

Now I said to him, "I've never used your expression, 'I have a hunch,' but I have a hunch about that rock. I think there's gold in it."

Wyatt was skeptical to the point of indifference. Nonetheless, I couldn't rid myself of the feeling that my rock contained valuable ore.

We decided to camp all night at the summit of the draw. Wyatt went through the tedious process of melting snow in our tub to water the horses. While he was waiting for a batch to melt, I begged him to break open my rock.

"Let's see what it's like inside before we go any farther."

He couldn't resist my wheedling—he almost never could—so he reluctantly broke the rock open. It was almost dark and we had a kerosene lantern lit by then. Even by its dim and uncertain light we could see that my hunch had probably been right. The inside was a sort of milky-looking quartz shot through with streamers of color. When I panned it, we found strings of gold in my horn

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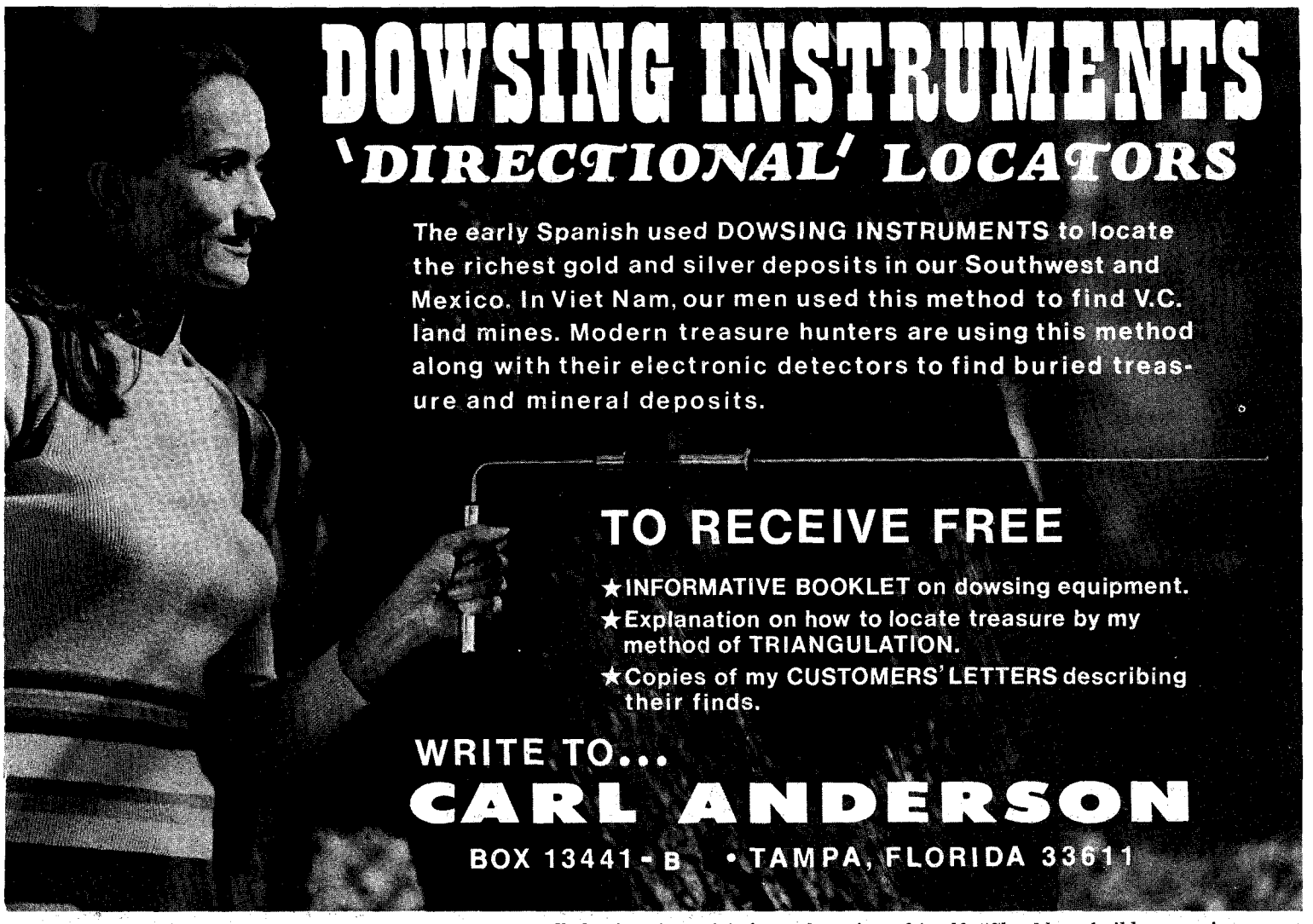

spoon. We had never found so rich looking a specimen.

I threw my arms around Wyatt and kissed him, then did a little jig in my clumsy makeshift mukluks. When I calmed down a little, I said, "See! My hunch was right! Suppose I hadn't picked the rock back up after you threw it away. We'd have lost a fortune."

Wyatt grinned. "We haven't found it yet. Don't count your chickens before they're hatched."

"Don't be a wet blanket," I scolded him.

"You don't even know where you picked it up. Right now your pockets are full of other rocks."

"I'll admit I've picked up a lot of rocks," I retorted, "but when I picked up this *one*, I built a little location marker. I suppose my hunch was beginning to work even then. Oh Wyatt, we might really be rich! We've got to go back and find the spot again."

"Look," Wyatt said, trying to be reasonable, "It's so cold right now your teeth are chattering, the hillsides where we'll be prospecting are slippery and dangerous, we no longer have a good camping outfit—and last but not least —I've got my belly full of prospecting. If you stay here, it's going to be by yourself. What do you say to that?"

"I say let's go back to Silver Peak and have Vollmer assay my sample."

"And I say the devil with the whole damn thing!" Wyatt shot back vigorously, tamping a load of tobacco into his pipe. He pulled a burning stick from the fire to light it with.

"Let's cut cards," I suggested, playing on his weakness for a gamble.

He gave me a long speculative look over the burning stick which he still held poised near his pipe. I knew I'd won a gambler's chance anyhow when the twinkle kindled in his eye—then he grinned. "You're on," he said.

I STILL remember the cards we each drew. Wyatt shuffled, offered me a cut of the shuffle, then cut out a queen of hearts. For a moment I lost faith in my hunch. Only eight cards in the deck would beat a queen. Two in thirteen odds. But I might also tie and get another chance; three in thirteen odds. I shut my eyes, cut and held the card with its face toward Wyatt. He uttered no sound. Curious, I opened my eyes and looked at what I had cut. An ace of spades. Some people think it's an unlucky card. I didn't then.

"All right, we'll go back to Silver Peak tomorrow," Wyatt agreed. "If the assay turns out good, we'll try to get some sort of outfit and come back and look for the ledge it came from."

"I'm sure we can find it," I eagerly gloated. Especially with the monument I put up there."

When we went to bed, I put the horn spoon with its precious contents into the jockey box of the wagon. I was so excited I could hardly sleep. "Supposing we have a bonanza," my mind kept asking of itself. "Should we build a mansion like the nabobs in San Francisco? Or should we continue to live the good simple life we are leading?" I decided the course of modesty would be more becoming to millionaires.

First thing in the morning I took the spoon out to examine the precious contents. A residue of water had frozen in it which I thawed over the breakfast fire. The gold was undoubtedly there. It looked even better in the light of day.

Mr. Vollmer was surprised to see us return. His first concern was that some misfortune had befallen us, and was happy to discover that it was just the opposite.

The sample assayed at over $300 per ton of ore. Figuring that $6 per ton plus the cost of transportation to the processing mill would break even, and that a cubic yard of rock might run three tons, the possibilities are evident. There are plenty of stories about bonanzas that run from $5,000 to $100,000 per ton of rock, but that is strictly high grade and also extremely unusual. Plenty, perhaps most, operations that made a good profit for the owners ran well under $100 per ton, yet made them fortunes over the long pull. Besides, there was also the chance that our sample might not be as rich as the average in the vein from which it came.

My enthusiasm was boundless when Mr. Vollmer gave us the news. Wyatt, at least outwardly, showed no signs of enthusiasm. "It's float rock," he reasoned.

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"It may have come from some ravine a hundred miles away. We may never find the vein."

"That's good ore," Mr. Vollmer allowed, "but Wyatt is right. Best not get your hopes up too high yet. It could be like hunting a needle in a haystack."

I felt my German temper coming up. I stamped my foot. "You men are hopeless. We came here to prospect. This is the only good prospect we've found. I think we'd better get back out there before someone else does."

My suspicions were already aroused that Vollmer, although Wyatt knew him well, might be throwing cold water on our hopes so he could send someone out there himself. I could hardly wait to get Wyatt aside and air my suspicions to him.

"My God," he said, "you've really got gold fever bad. If we find the damn thing, I'm going to have to watch you close so you don't put the camp ax in my head."

His remark sobered me up a little, bringing me back to earth. Though said in jest, Wyatt almost never made a remark such as that, which might possibly hurt someone's feelings or anger them.

I thought, "Have I really got gold fever? Is the hope of a fortune corrupting me?" After soberly reflecting on it, I had to admit to myself that there was a good chance it was.

IN ANY EVENT Wyatt set about getting another outfit to go back looking for the ledge.

"I'll give you your fill of prospecting," he promised in a growl.

His remark revealed that he didn't realize what a grip prospecting had got on me or he'd have never made such a promise.

First we found a good home for the cat in Silver Peak. Next we laid in a supply of provisions to last several weeks. We were able to find only a small tent since almost everyone wanted to buy; very few were selling anything. The tent was shaped like a tepee.

It was afternoon before we had everything in order to leave Silver Peak. As a consequence, it was fairly late when at last we made camp somewhere near the spot where I'd built the location monument.

Wyatt made as comfortable a camp as he could under the circumstances. He shovelled the snow away from the ground where he was going to pitch the tent, then he spread two bales of hay on the ground. Over the hay he laid the canvas we used to roll our bedding in, placing the mattress on half of it and pulling the other half over our blankets on top of the mattress. We were both dog tired and went directly to bed after Wyatt took care of the team.

I thought at first our hay bed wouldn't be too bad. That was at first. Toward morning we were almost frozen stiff. It comes as a surprise to find out how much heavier a bedroll is needed to stay comfortable in the cold months.

Wyatt rolled out and started the fire for breakfast. When I followed, it was slowly at first because every joint in my body was stiff and painful. However, I thought it would be a good idea under the circumstances to keep my misery to myself. Wyatt still was very cool toward this whole business. I thought one complaint might be the straw that broke the camel's back.

The fire's warmth followed by hard physical activity in prospecting soon loosened me up. My anticipation of making our rich find was enough to make me forget a few muscular aches and pains.

The first day I hunted methodically for my monument. It was nowhere to be found. Even the country didn't appear the same. A new covering of snow made the difference. I ended up going around feverishly brushing snow from every hummock in sight hoping to turn up my monument. No luck. But I was sure we were in the right general location, so we both went to work hunting for a ledge from which my sample may have come.

My mind still harbored visions of the prosperous, bustling mining town that our discovery would found here in the rolling hills.

The second day when I still hadn't found any monument, we determined upon a methodical search for a likely outcropping in the surrounding hills. I worked with dogged determination if ever there was such a thing—I was not going to be cheated out of my strike. Wyatt worked along with me faithfully and as hard as I did, but I wondered why in a way, since he had little hope that we'd do more than get some exercise. I wondered how he had so much patience with my stubbornness.

Often the days were bitterly cold. And for all our work we only found two rocks like my sample, neither of which showed color. We stumbled around bundled to our eyeballs, as the saying went. Our hands would get almost too cold to hold the pick.

WE STUCK with it for about three weeks until Wyatt could see that I didn't have enough sense to give up a fruitless search.

Finally he announced, "We're pulling out of here. This is a fool's errand in this weather. I'll pack you out of here bodily if I have to, but I'm not staying another day."

I recognized the no-nonsense finality in his tone and knew better than to ignore it.

Storms had been sweeping across our little cove and were increasing in intensity. I knew he was taking the course of wisdom in pulling out before we were snowed in, but still I could hardly bring myself to leave. It was the biggest disappointment I'd felt in years. How could we have missed out on our bonanza after my hunch and all the other things that seemed to foretell a fortune in the cards for us? I still prospected till the moment I had to get in the wagon to leave.

We made the railroad in one day, then went to Los Angeles. The weather was a dream compared to what we'd just left. We rested up, visited around and attended to a little business. Then we ran out of things to do. Reading had even lost its appeal. Even Tony, the dog, was restless. After a week or so of this, I found Wyatt staring at me with a quizzical, half-humorous expression on his face.

"Are you thinking what I am?" I asked eagerly.

"There are a lot of places up on the desert a darn sight warmer than Nevada is what I was thinking," he said. "Only this time we're looking for a ranch, regardless of where we go. I've always wanted one and I'm going to have one."

I had no disposition to oppose such a show of resolution. But where to go was something else again. I got out the straws. What's more, I drew the long one two times out of three.

"If you decide to go back to that miserable gulch, you'll go alone," Wyatt cautioned. But I had another place picked already—it had been in the back of my mind ever since our overland trek to Tonopah, perhaps ever since my first camping trip to Yuma. Something about the Colorado River country fascinated me. Besides, Wyatt had heard that some government land was going to be opened for location up in that country.

When a Cowboy Falls in Love

(Continued from page 23)

snaky horses. I got a job working in a bank in the nearby town of Santa Anna. It turned out to be a dull experience.

I HAD withstood fairly well the monotony of six months of school in Poughkeepsie, New York. There were so many things that were new and novel to me. During the winter there was ice skating on the Hudson River and toboggan sledding on a long hill near my boarding house. Vaudeville shows were plentiful and at reasonable prices. After completing their run in New York, good shows frequently stopped in Poughkeepsie for a one-night stand while on their way to Chicago. Besides, there were occasional trips down to The City itself where any and all kind of entertainment was at hand. Those luxurious New York Central trains we rode to and from were something to write home about. And, of course, later there had been the carefree life in the cow camps and the gaiety of the Montana towns. Working in a bank and living in Santa Anna was entirely different.

The thrill of juggling figures and counting money—when it wasn't mine—soon went sour. It had no more attraction than peeling potatoes. My only diversion was an occasional spree with the bank cashier's blacksheep brother. We even had to import our liquor from another town. Then when we got wound up there was no place to go and nothing to do if we got there. The people went to roost about the same time as the chickens. One month of that kind of life was enough for me. I put in the balance of the winter down on my dad's ranch and was much happier working for him.

When the birds started chirping and the mesquite buds started popping open, I started dreaming. I could see the

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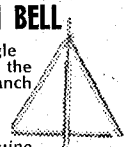

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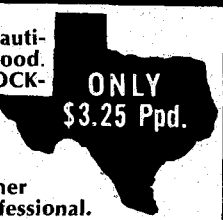

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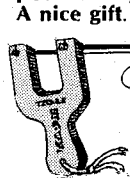

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Powder River Pool Roundup in camp at sundown. It was the quiet and peaceful part of the day. Some of the men were staking out night horses against the time they would be called to stand their guard. Others were looking for a smooth place to unroll their beds, and others were busy doing nothing.

The chuckwagon set backed up to the front of the cook tent, and cantankerous old Charlie Dyer, the cook, was fixing things up for a quick breakfast next morning. He liked that. The quicker he got breakfast, the less sleep we got! Always close at hand was that old .45 caliber hogleg that he kept to back up his threat that he would shoot the first s-o-b that rode his horse close enough to stir up dust that might blow into his cooking.

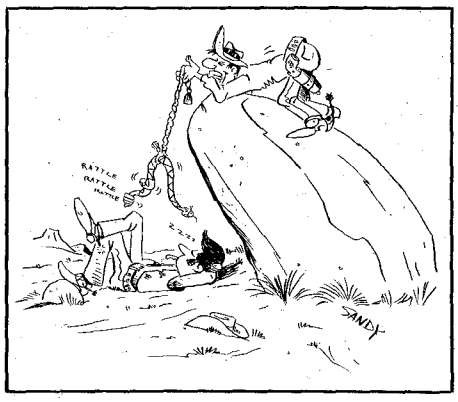
Tall, taciturn, and dignified John Milroy, the horse wrangler, was turning the remuda of two hundred saddle horses over to half-tough Leo Fish, the nighthawk, and pointing out the best grazing to herd the horses on during the night. The bobtail watch was drifting the day herd slowly onto the bed ground and we who stood first guard were getting ready to go out and take over.

I stood guard with Larry Thomas, a rep from the Kempton layout down on the Yellowstone. Larry knew a lot of songs and when the cattle were lying quietly, the sound of his voice came floating across to me as we rode slowly around the herd. One of his songs was the lament of a boy who had failed to find Montana to his liking, such as: "The badlands of Montana is the worst I've ever seen; where the cowboys all are tenderfeet and the horses are so mean."

Parts of those two lines are incorrect. The badlands were a little rough, all right—and some of the horses were mean—but not all of the cowboys were tenderfeet by a long shot. There was a high percentage of Texans working cattle in Montana which took in some of the toughest men that ever eluded a sheriff and yet who ranked among the most proficient cowhands that ever pulled on a cinch strap. In addition, boys from other parts and some of the natives were just as good at the trade as the Texans who had set the pattern in the first place.

At three o'clock in the morning, I could hear the crack of the nighthawk's long whip and his profanity as he hazed the remuda into the large rope corral. That was followed soon by the cook yelling like he was trying to make somebody hear him a mile away. "Roll out, you slumbering jackasses! Roll out—and come and get it!" Sometimes he had a different name for us but it was never pretty. The excellent food he prepared offset his despotism around camp and most everybody liked him. No one ever saw fit to call his hand to see if he would use that old .45. From the cut of his eye it was my guess that he would, with very little provocation.

Daylight comes mighty early in Montana in the summer. It was always dark when old Charlie hollered us out of bed. From then on, it was hustle, bustle and hurry. There was a lot of work to be done in a short time, but it didn't take



eighteen or twenty men, working fast, long to do it.

Each man rolled and tied his own bed and dropped it in a pile at the bed wagon. After a hurried breakfast some of us caught, harnessed and hitched the four-horse teams that pulled the chuckwagon and the bedwagon. Others knocked the tent down and loaded it. Others piled the beds high on the wagon and lashed them down like a load of hay. When old Charlie put away the last of his pots and pans and closed the chuck box lid, the stove was lifted onto its cart and the cart hitched to the hind axle of the chuckwagon. As soon as we caught our day horses, the rope corral was knocked down and the ropes were coiled and hung to the rack on the back end of the bedwagon.

The amount of fun that followed depended on the number of salty horses topped off that particular morning. It seemed like when the pool members filled their allotments, they sent in all their locos and outlaws for us to ride. Those Montana horses were big and strong. Many of them were hard to saddle, hard to get on, and still harder to ride. Now and then a boy would turn bilious and blind and find himself on the ground holding onto a sage bush instead of his bridle reins.

By the time the sun peeped over the horizon the outfit was on the move. The wagons were rolling toward the next campsite and our hard-driving boss, Neil Boyle, was leading us around the rim on circle. Three or four hours later, cattle were stringing onto the roundup ground from all directions.

The wagons were already in camp and a quarter of a mile away. With his bed rolled out in the shade underneath the bed wagon, the night hawk was getting his rest. And whoa! There was old Charlie coming out from under the chuckwagon where he had been taking a nap before starting dinner. He often taunted us by saying he could sleep in the daytime and feed us at night.

John Milroy had the remuda penned in the recently erected rope corral where we could change to fresh horses from our tired ones. Then Texas Claude McCracken or Frenchy Farnum, or any one of the other fancy loop-flingers would ride into the roundup to rope and drag out bucking, bawling calves for us to wrestle down and brand.

I SAW and heard all of this and more—part at one time and part at another time—as I lay in bed at night half awake and half asleep, until I could resist the pull no longer. It was like Kipling stated so aptly a long time ago:

"The voice of the East has a nasal twang—
While that of the West—when it blows,
She lets out a yell—like the pipes of hell—
And the man she calls for—goes."

Montana was calling and I answered, "Powder River! Here I come!"

I baggage-checked my saddle, bed roll, and a small steamer trunk with that watch still in it. I put in the next three nights and two days lounging around in day coaches and waiting in depots for train connections, up through Fort Worth, Amarillo, Denver, Cheyenne, and down the Yellowstone to Miles City. My outfit was hauled out to the ranch and the trunk stowed away in the bunkhouse. As soon as we could gather the saddle horses, the work started.

One day while the roundup was camped within riding distance of the headquarters ranch, I went in to get a change of clothes. The fellow we called Red Bird went along. While I rummaged through my trunk he caught sight of that watch and it set him on fire. He started in to talk me out of it right off the reel.

"I'll give you a gun for it," he said and he fished that cussed automatic from its holster under his right chap leg.

That put me on the spot. There had been times when I felt like throwing that watch so far nobody would ever find it. But a sentimental memory held me back. Now, when I got a chance to get rid of it with some reason, I still wanted to crawfish out.

"But that's a lady's watch," I hedged. "You don't want that, do you?"

"Yeah, I know it's a lady's watch," he came back at me. "That's why I want it. This fall I'm heading straight for Nebraska. I yearn to pin that watch right square above the heart of a certain little girl down there."

"Well, I'll be damned," was all I could think to say. He cradled the watch in his hands and he seemed to go into a trance as he gazed out the bunkhouse door. He didn't see me or anything around us. He was looking across six or eight hundred miles of hills and prairie at a girl in some hayseed nester community down in Nebraska.

I didn't give a tinker's damn for that little pistol he was flashing at me. I already had a gun in my bed roll that was better than any automatic. But it was the sick-calf look in his eyes that got under my skin and struck me in my weak spot. I knew exactly how he felt. I had traveled that same road myself.

"All right," I said. "You can have the watch. It never brought me anything but grief anyhow. I hope you have better luck with it than I did."

In that way the exchange was made. The gun with its loaded magazine of cartridges went into the trunk and the watch passed out of my hands forever. And the days rolled on.

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THE fall roundup of 1910 was over. By the time we made the last shipment of beef cattle to market, cold weather had set in. Most of the saddle horses were turned loose on the open range where they would run until time to gather them for the general roundup next spring. All the extra men were cut loose like the horses to rustle for themselves and to wonder what they had done with their summer wages.

My moonbeam-chasing pal from Nebraska was long gone on his mission to meet the joy of his heart. As for myself, I just "soaked in" at the ranch, helping enough with odds and ends to keep my welcome. The monotony was broken by an occasional trip to town. Transportation was easy. The Miles City and Ekalaka stage rolled past the ranch house three times a week.

During those idle days I began to think a little about my future. It looked like if I ever intended to do anything worthwhile it was high time to get started. I had just passed my twenty-third birthday and it seemed like a lot of time had been wasted already. Montana offered good opportunities for a man who knew something about horses and cattle and was willing to work. There was still considerable public domain open for homestead entry and desert claim filing which would serve as a starter.

The big outfits were gradually closing out their holdings and were being supplanted by comparatively small operators who pooled their facilities such as men and horses and camp equipment under one head and continued to work the range in the same manner as their predecessors. Right then, there was still an abundance of open and free range for all of us. It wouldn't last forever, but it would prevail long enough for a fellow to get a foothold. By the first of the year I had made my decision to stake my future in Montana.

I returned to Texas with the full intention of winding up what little business affairs I had there and, with the break of winter into spring, go back to the land of the Yellowstone and Powder to stay. But it didn't turn out that way. Other things came up and I never made it back to Montana.

During those last two and a half years of restless uncertainty, I had seen the girl of my choice only one time. The meeting was entirely accidental. It was during the Christmas holidays of 1909, soon after I had decided against becoming a bank president or a janitor—depending on which way the cards happened to fall. We met face to face on the sidewalk one day in town.

The occasion was sort of uncomfortable for both of us. I asked her how she was getting along and she said, "Fine." She asked me how I was and I said, "Fine." She told me she was finishing up a term down at the state university and was home for Christmas. I was ashamed to tell her that I was just rambling around. That was about all that was said.

I didn't ask her for a date and she didn't invite me to call. There was a look in her eyes, though, that made me think she hadn't been exactly truthful when she said she was fine—and I know damn well that I lied about it.

WHEN I came home in January of 1911 to pull up stakes for the last time, I heard in a roundabout way that she was teaching school somewhere in the region.

It is unbelievable that a man would forget the factor which led up to the most important event of his life. Be that as it may, I can't recall in any way, shape, form or fashion what happened to bring us together again—but something did. Fifteen or eighteen months later, we married. Now, after sixty-odd anniversaries, it looks like we've got a good chance to make a go of it.

Well, it is a long way by both time and distance back to the rolling hills and mesquite grass prairie of my native Texas; to the Flint Hills of bluestem grass of the Creek and Osage Nations of Old Indian Territory; to the Badlands and Buttes and grama grass ridges and valleys along the Yellowstone and Powder in Montana; and to the flat lands of buffalo grass and the sand hills of sagebrush in Western Kansas and Eastern Colorado. Here on the coast of Southern California this morning, there is an aura of peaceful serenity.

Lazy ocean waves rolling in and out over the beach sands. The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and my Mary is happy. She has just called to me through an open window to announce the birth of "the most beautiful blooms" on some flower plant—which I know very little about—and care less.

While she digs among and nurtures those "beautiful" flowers, a has-been cowhand and bronc snapper is trying to remember some of the ups and downs, the pitfalls and stepping stones, the good and the bad encounters along the way. Has-been is the word. Who hadn't rather be a has-been than a never-was?

Eventually, I learned how and where the automatic pistol wound up. Both it and the man I lent it to, came to a tragic end. Despondent over his forthcoming murder trial and other involvements caused him to commit suicide. Some time before, he left the pistol at the home of a relative. The relative told me a long time afterward that he disposed of the pistol by dropping it in a dry bored well 200 feet deep. He claimed that he did not know the caliber.

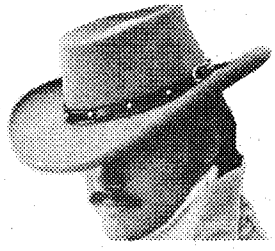
But I like to hope that the watch is still kept as a memento by one who now would be a senior citizen, and that the gallant boy who "yearned to pin it right square above her heart" is still around spading dirt in the garden, pruning shrubbery under her direction and performing other degrading chores like I am forced to do—all of which is offensive to the pride and dignity of any self-respecting horse and saddle and rope man, but makes a happy ending.

A Mix of Shrewdness and Nerve

(Continued from page 34)

diers. They were all riding to Fort Hay. Suddenly Bill announced that he "smelled Indians." Even as he spoke, Indians began to appear from behind every tree,

THE CASINO



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shooting as they came. The survivors later reported that there were about 200 of them. Whatever the number, there were too many to fight, and the small party of white men made a sudden lunge forward—toward the fort and protection. Before they could get away, a volunteer's horse was shot from under him. Bill and Elias Wright turned back to help him. The report given by a man who was present states dramatically, "Willie Hay, only fourteen years of age, turned back with Wright and they both rode toward him, right into the blaze and smoke of the hostile guns."

Wright was shot to death, and his body badly mutilated. Olney, the volunteer soldier, got away by running, kicking off his spurs as he ran, and by finally getting into a creek and lying under water, for many hours, with only his nose out to the air. Bill and three other men escaped, and with yelling Rogue Indians in full pursuit, they went for Fort Hay as fast as their horses cauld take them.

When Bill talked about the incident later it was in a matter-of-fact manner. "I just got out of there when I saw I couldn't help. When Olney's horse was shot, its blood squirted all over my horse and I thought I was shot. When I thought Olney was safe on Wright's horse I took off across country. I didn't need to whip my horse. He went over a log that was six feet high. He just climbed it and I hung on."

A guard of the volunteers was stationed at the fort. As soon as the fleeing men turned in at the gate of the little stockade, couriers were sent out for help to an encampment of soldiers on Eight Dollar Mountain. Five men were sent out to recover Wright's body—and as they then thought, that of Olney. One of the volunteers was killed. It was a very bad night along the trail to Fort Hay that night. Mule trains were waylaid, and at least one driver was killed. The Indians promptly dumped all the flour on the ground and drank the whiskey.

The long night finally ended and the Indians stole away, but it was remembered by the men of the vicinity that Bill Hay was never called "Willie" after that night. Afterwards Mike Bushey, who was then a captain in the volunteers, went up and down the creeks and rivers of Southern Oregon and all the way down the Rogue River to the coast, scouting for the white settlers. Perhaps Bill Hay was with him.

WHEN the Indian wars were over that spring, Bill's father again enlarged his home and opened a store to supply the miners. He had rooms for the convenience of mule trains coming through. Bill worked in his father's blacksmith shop and store and helped with the cattle on the ranch. In 1857 his twin brothers went to British Columbia as there were reports of rich gold strikes on the Fraser River. Bill had to stay home to help his father farm.

There was still no adequate road system. Crescent City, California was just over the mountains, on the coast, but the grades were so steep that wagons could not get through. Surveys, authorized to try to find a suitable place for a wagon road, had all been unsuccessful; either the surveyors had become lost or they had been attacked by Indians. One group even scouted the wrong river.

There was a mule train route from the coast to Jacksonville, then the main town in Southern Oregon. Bill watched the pack trains carry all kinds of supplies —even pool table and pianos were brought along, slung between mules. There were also mule passenger-trains.

Crescent City citizens helped in trying to promote a wagon road to the interior. Such a road would increase the town's chances of becoming a major seaport.

Materials brought over the passes by mule train were very expensive at the end of the line. Butter which sold for 50¢ per pound in Crescent City cost $1.50 inland. Salt could be purchased in San Francisco, shipped to Crescent City and sold there for 15¢ per pound, but by the time it was packed into the valley where Bill Hay lived it cost from $2.00 to $3.00. Onions increased in price from 25¢ to $2.00 per pound over the fifty-five-mile trip, and tobacco went from 50¢ on the coast to $5.00 inland. Also, when the weather was bad and teamsters couldn't get enough mules through to bring all the supplies, whiskey and salt had priority and other staples were omitted.

Eventually, however, the wagon road

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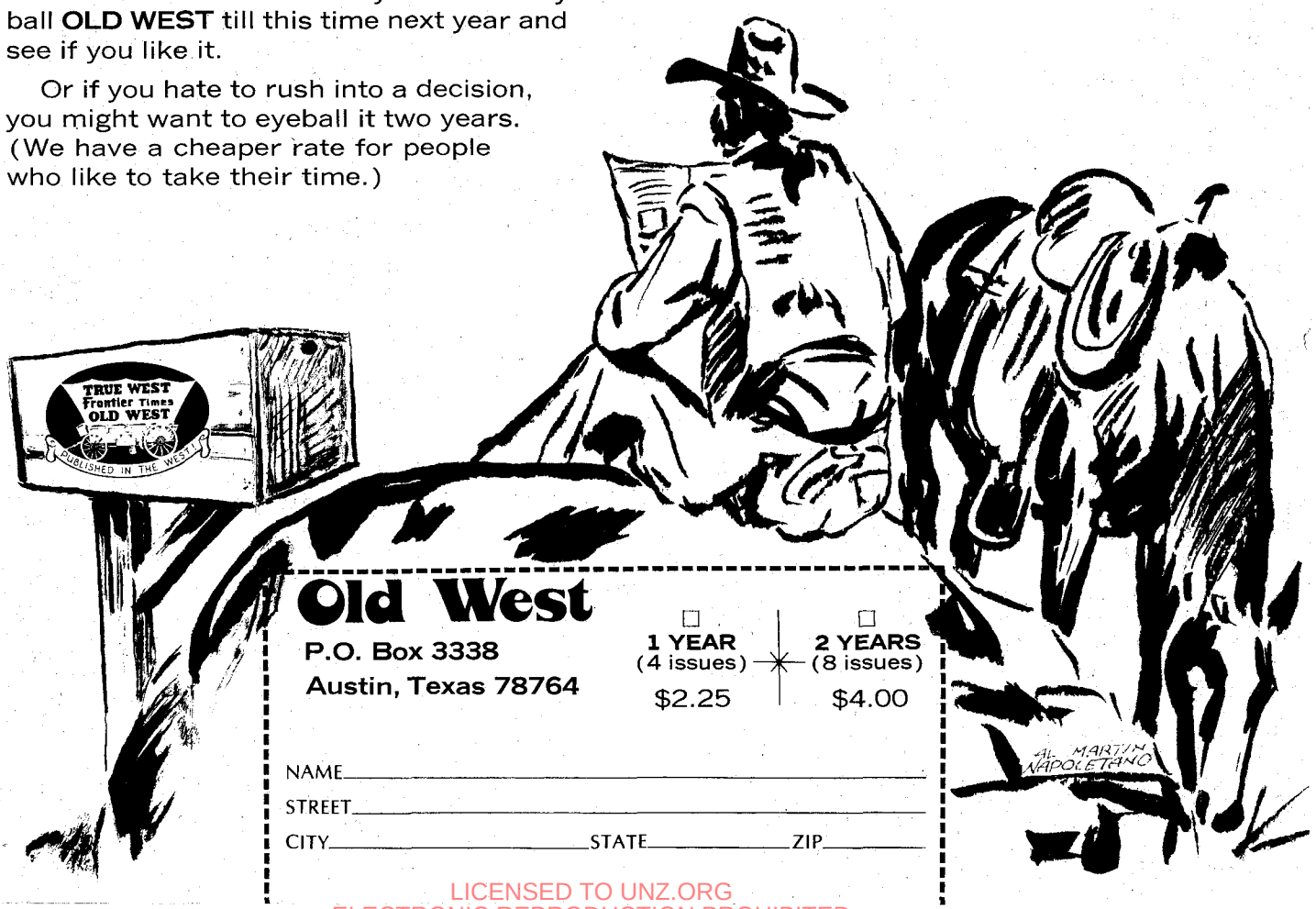

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was surveyed and during its construction Bill Hay was one of the workers. Sixty years later he talked about his part in this effort. "In 1858 they built a wagon road from Waldo to Crescent City. One hundred miles of grade and some deep cuts cost $100,000, which was an average of $1,000 a mile. . . . On one section of the road where I was working they struck a swamp in the redwood timber. The man in charge of the road building decided they would have to cut a road through the heavy redwood trees. If you have ever been in redwood timber you know that lots of these trees are six to twelve feet through.

"I said, 'If I were building this road I'd go right across the swamp instead of making a detour around it and having to cut those heavy redwood trees.' I was only sixteen years old, and the road supervisor laughed and said, 'You are pretty young for a road engineer, aren't you? How would you build this road?' I told him that on our place I had built a road across a swamp by putting heavy bark across it in the form of corduroy, and that you could drive a four-horse team over it.

"He had the men gather heavy redwood bark and pave the swamp with this bark. They laid it two layers deep, and for years it was the best piece of road between Waldo and Crescent City."

MINING was one of the main occupations of Southern Oregon from the time of its initial settlement. Thousands came into the country, moving from creek bed to creek bed looking for gold. Dozens of rough mining towns were located in the Rogue River Valley and along the Applegate and Illinois Rivers. But from the time Bill Hay was a youngster, he had more interest in animals, blacksmithing, business and farming than in mining. For a time he made his living by furnishing miners with supplies, services and advice; and he was well aware of their problems, their mining methods, and he even prospected some.

Bill Hay participated, if unwillingly, in the discovery of the Gold Hill Pocket. The story of the discovery is unusual. In the early part of January 1860, when Bill Hay was seventeen years old, he was working on a farm for a man named Thomas Chavner. This farm was in the area where the town of Gold Hill now stands. Bill had a friend whose name was purposely lost because at the time he was wanted by the law. They were riding along on Chavner's farm when the friend get off his horse to examine a piece of quartz. While he was so occupied, his horse ran away. He put the piece of quartz in his pocket.

The boys recovered the horse, and Bill went back to his plowing. When his friend reached Jacksonville that night he was arrested and thrown in jail. He gave the piece of quartz to George Ish to have it assayed. He also explained where he had found it. As soon as Ish examined it he knew that here was a bonanza. Ish showed the quartz to Jack Long and John Miller, saloon owners at nearby Willow Springs. Subsequently, Long and Miller took turns keeping the saloon open and, with Ish, searching for the ledge of gold. Long and Miller knew an English emigrant, who also seems not to have a name. For $3 he agreed to help.

They went into the search area day after day, while a young man nearby continued to plow a field. No doubt he had the look of raillery in his eye that Mr. Lampman described so many years later. At last the disappointed seekers approached Bill at his plowing and asked if he had seen two men chasing a horse. He admitted that he was one of those men, but he couldn't help them because he thought he shouldn't leave his plowing. Another $3 got him to change his mind and he showed them the place where his friend had found the piece of quartz.

When Mr. Chavner had been notified and the claim staked out Bill Hay claimed a share for himself and a share for his friend in jail. After it was finally settled there seemed to be seven partners. But Bill, not being interested in mining, or perhaps not having the capital to help develop the mine, sold his part to the other partners for $5,000.

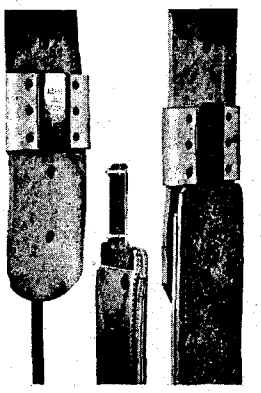
The prospect of a new gold strike brought people from far and near. An interesting little letter was sent to the *Daily Alta California* newspaper and printed February 26, 1860. The writer dated his letter February 14 and mailed it from Jacksonville, signing it "On the Wing."

The letter contained this paragraph: "But the most simultaneous get up-and-bundle-out-to diggin's we ever saw was the rush to Gold Hill the other day. At midnight every stable in town was empty; everything that had wheels had a full freight. Saturday morning, January 14, Gold Hill looked like an overgrown camp meeting; horses were hitched to trees all around the glittering garden of gold. Like turkeys picking up corn did they pick up rocks loaded with gold. . . . Next day, Sunday, the census of the county could have been taken without much trouble, as everybody was at Gold Hill."

IT IS a safe bet that at least by the time this letter was in print, Bill Hay was over on the Applegate River with his $5,000 in his pocket, looking for a farm to buy.

He later sold that farm and moved to Rock Point. A stage line had begun running between Portland and Sacramento. It was highly advertised and was the first "almost sure" way to get through safely, and it stopped at Rock Point. In line with his following what was happening in Oregon, Bill built a blacksmith shop there and was soon offered the job of shoeing horses for the stage line. He leased his blacksmith shop and started out.

Lampman reported the interlude in this way: "At Rock Point the stages halted with a grinding of brakes and a flourish of ribbons, for such repairs as might be needed, for a nail in a shoe, a new fitting, and for the stretching of legs. There it was that Bill Hay became a blacksmith for the stage company, and the crony of the lean young valiants who drove. And there it was that he remained in a shower of sparks



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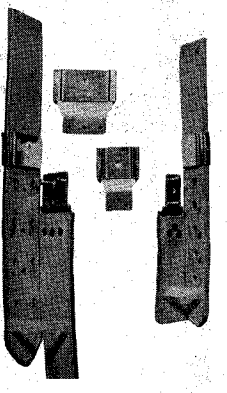

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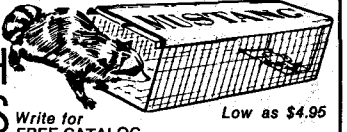

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until the railroad went through and a new chapter opened."

Bill told the same story in his less dramatic way. "I practically had to shoe the horses on the go—not while the horses were going but I had to travel from Roseburg to the other side of the Siskiyous [in California], making every stage station and shoeing the horses. . . . I worked for the stage company until 1883, when the Southern Pacific Railroad came through and put us out of business."

Again as Oregon moved into a new era of growth, so did Bill Hay. After the railroad replaced the stage, Bill moved to Central Point and ran a warehouse for the Southern Pacific as a sideline to his blacksmith shop. For ten years he shod horses and made tools for the rapidly increasing farms. He also sold agricultural implements, ran a livery stable, and a dance hall above it. Most of these endeavors were going on simultaneously.

Oregon was diversifying faster than Bill could, though. He said of this time, "I tried to get four hours sleep a day, but I didn't always make it!"

At last he sold all his interests except the franchise for selling agricultural implements. It is said that he went bankrupt but he never mentioned this in later interviews. In the early 1900s he moved to Gold Hill, the town named for that famous Gold Hill Pocket. Here he started another blacksmith shop and worked for another ten years or more, leaving relatives to operate a ranch he owned nearby.

Then Bill retired to enjoy his fishing, and meeting companions in the "Smoke House," a saloon belonging to his son. Bill Hay learned, long before the tourists did, that Oregon was a supreme place for retirement and that the Rogue River was particularly good for salmon and steelhead. A good description of his hobby is described in the final tribute Lampman paid him.

"Old Bill had a fly rod in which there was magic and he made the rod himself, for craftsmanship dwelt in those aged hands. This rod was contrived of sections of historic stage whips, once flourished by celebrated drivers. It was of hickory and very heavy. . . . It was ponderously pliable, if such a phrase may fit, and in the hands of Old Bill it could and did wing a gray hackle far and away over the Rogue, to such haunts as steelheads prefer.

"I do not recall that anybody ever saw him at his fishing or knew for a certainty which riffle was his. Yet presently Old Bill Hay would be coming up from the Rogue and at his shoulder would

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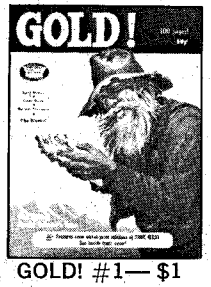
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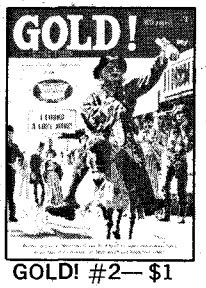
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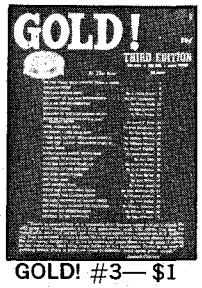
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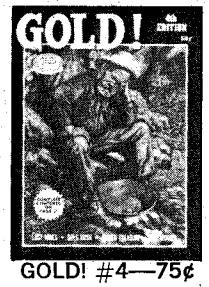
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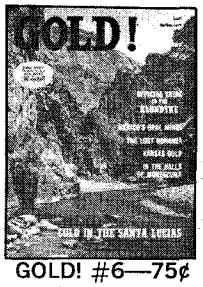
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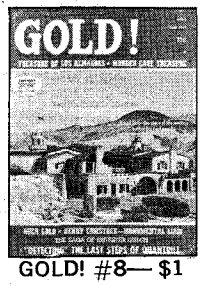
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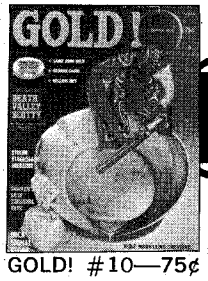
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shine the silver flank of a fat fish or two, and in his eyes for all whom he met, would be that light of raillery. He had opened the season. . . .

"I have but to reflect for a moment, a mere matter of memory, to see Bill Hay coming from across the tracks, where he had a cottage near the river—a powerful, rather dark-visaged old fellow, with a blacksmith's stoop to his heavy shoulders, and a very human twinkle in his eye. He was bearded like a bard, or rather he was bearded as were those characters of the old mining camps, the old trails, who have residence now only in the pages of Bret Harte and in towns such as Gold Hill."

When Bill died he was buried in Hay's Cemetery where he had already buried some of his family, a cemetery which is a part of the last ranch he owned. This ranch has long since been split by a freeway and divided into many homesites along the river. The cemetery itself is on a hill overlooking the town of Gold Hill and in plain sight of the abandoned Gold Hill Pocket.

The Saga of John Moss

(Continued from page 12)

ment, but no record of his service has been discovered.

After selling or incorporating several of his mining properties, Moss prospected for a time in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. There is a record of a J. T. Moss being married in Keysville in 1866, but nothing is known of the union. He wrote to a brother from Coarsegold Gulch in September 1867, but soon he was back prospecting the cruel desert country along the Colorado. Sometime during this period, he had another of the adventures which won him his Indian name.

On a prospecting trip, Moss decided to cross the Mojave Desert—a feat which at that time had only been accomplished by Indians. "He made arrangements," wrote his wife many years later, "for some of the Indians to follow him in four days, packed his mule with water and food and started. After a couple of days something happened to his supply of water. . . . His food gave out. He was near his journey's end, but lost his bearings and wandered around in a circle; he tried to kill his mule for food, but it broke loose and got away from him. He became exhausted; would walk a few steps then fall down; he had given up all hope when the Indians found him and carried him to the end of his journey. . . ."

Moss visited his old home again in June 1871 and while there took the 3rd Degree in Masonry. Back in San Francisco in September, he was noted in the local press as having "left yesterday with a large working force, to develop two of the mines discovered by him—the Pirate Chief and Piute Joe. Captain Moss is the mining Kit Carson of the coast who cannot long remain within the domains of civilization. . . ." These mines were in San Bernardino County, California—still the blistering deserts that he knew so well.

Although a skillful prospector who knew his minerals by this time, Moss was involved in the great diamond hoax which occurred during the summer of 1872. He and others followed a prospecting party into the southwest corner of Colorado, only to discover later that they were all decoys. While they were off in the wilds, the masterminds of the scheme were "prospecting" their salted fields of diamonds in Wyoming. The fraud quickly became apparent, however, and Moss and other groups of duped prospectors foolishly returned to California. From that time on, Moss stuck strictly to gold and silver, although he told the newspapers he had found quantities of rare gems in Colorado.

What Moss had really discovered, however, was a rich looking area along the La Plata River. He had heard of this country before while living with the Moqui Indians, but now he had seen it first-hand and liked what he saw. Returning to San Francisco, he had no trouble interesting the Parrott brothers, wealthy bankers of the city, in a prospecting venture. They readily agreed to financing a trip back to Colorado.

Picking his men carefully, Moss assembled a seasoned group of miners and was soon moving east across Arizona. It was the summer of 1873 when he struck the Moqui Pueblos. Soon Moss' party was turning up color along the La Plata River in the San Juan section of southern Colorado.

In a letter which appeared in the Tucson *Citizen*, Moss described the new El Dorado. "I have struck one of the finest countries for minerals of all kinds, and agricultural and stock purposes. . . . I think we have big placers, too, every shovelful shows the color. . . . The country is heavily timbered, and has more large streams of water than any portion of California. I have found gold and silver leads, and several bodies of anthracite coal.

"One of my men was severely wounded by an accidental discharge of a Henry rifle; the ball entered his neck, passing between the windpipe and spine. I think he will recover, although the wound is a terrible one. . . ."

IN addition to the wounded man and approaching winter, Moss found he had hostile Indians to deal with also. The San Juan country had been ceded to the whites earlier that year, but Chief Ignacio and his Utes were not happy with the thought of prospectors prowling their lands.

Moss was as much Indian as white when the occasion demanded and he negotiated his own treaty with the red men. In exchange for permission to mine thirty-six square miles of the river, Moss was to give the Indians one hundred ponies, a quantity of blankets, and other gifts. The Utes insisted, however, that white men must not leave the river, or hunt, under penalty of death.

Bitter glances from some of the natives filled most of the prospectors with alarm, Moss or no Moss, yet "He had a wonderful influence with Chief Ignacio and his bunch," recalled one early settler. "They called him 'Captain.' He was surely our savior that year [although] . . .

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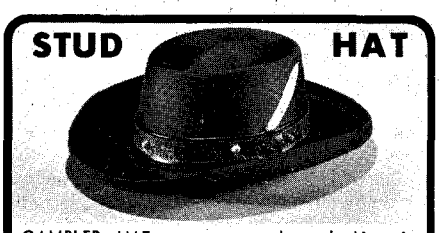

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several times up to '78 they gave us 'one or two sleeps' to get out."

When the prospecting party ran out of food, Moss took Bill Wrage and headed for the closest settlement in New Mexico. They returned with supplies nine days later, fully expecting the wounded Dick Giles to be dead, but to their surprise he was well on the way to complete recovery.

Nevertheless, it was too late in the season to start any mining operations. After collecting sample ore to show his backers, Moss, Giles and Wrage headed for California while the rest of the party struck out for Baker's Park. In San Francisco the Parrott brothers were delighted with the results of their investment and promised Moss everything he needed for a return to the La Plata in the spring. After a whirlwind tour of the local entertainment spots, Moss headed south into the great San Joaquin Valley.

According to an old newspaper account, he rode into Visalia in late November or early December 1873. Traditionally he was returning to scenes of earlier exploits when he first lived with the Indians in the Sierra foothills.

While Moss had been with the Indians, Spaniards from the coast who were mining in the area had mistreated some of the Indian women. The Spaniards were promptly killed and all traces of their mine destroyed. The "White Coyote," as the Indians called Moss, knew the location of the mine, however, and he took this knowledge with him when he left his native friends and headed East.

Moss' return some years later was expressly to retrieve some of the riches of the lost Spanish mine. Strapping bear paws to his boots so as to leave no human track, Moss made his way to the mine and began operations. Monache Bill and eight other Indians knew what Moss was up to and determined to keep the news of gold from the outside. The red men trailed him to the mine, but the wily Moss lay in ambush and killed them all—or so the story goes.

Now Moss had returned to the Four Creeks country to find Visalia a growing village in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. He undoubtedly had friends in town—mining acquaintances from nearby Tailholt or Whiskey Flat. It wasn't long, either, before he was recognized by a local Indian. Moss, the Indian told his friends, had once been his sister's *hombre* at the Indian village on the banks of the Kaweah.

The Indians knew full well why Moss was in town and made several attempts to follow him to the lost mine, but the Lone Coyote had no trouble eluding them, and as soon as he made another haul from the mine, he disappeared.

IN the spring of 1874 Moss, Dick Giles, and others headed back into the San Juan country of Colorado. They had plenty of supplies, presents for the Utes, and unlimited credit from Charles and Tiburcio Parrott.

Other prospectors were in the San Juan Mountains by then and Moss promptly set up a mining district, naming his camp Parrott City. At a meeting held on April 13, laws of the district were enacted and Moss was elected recorder. Mining activity was brisk for a time.

Early in September William H. Jackson, the noted photographer, visited camp as a member of the U. S. Geological Survey. He described Parrott City as being "located in a grove nearly on a level with the stream, & the tents are scattered in & among the trees in a most picturesque confusion. Every variety of habitation, from a good tent to a brush wicky up. . . ."

One of the local prospectors had told Jackson of some remarkable ancient ruins in the nearby Mesa Verde country. Anxious to photograph these ruins, Jackson looked up the source of the stories, which proved to be John Moss. Moss agreed to guide him to the site, and early on the morning of September 9 they were on their way.

"We had as guide and mentor," wrote Jackson later, "Capt. John Moss, a small wiry man of about 35, as hardy and tough as an Indian, quiet, reserved and even tempered, helpful and resourceful in all that pertains to life in the open—his knowledge of the country and its little bands of aborigines was of great service in many ways."

The Mesa Verde ruins had been the home of ancient peoples some seven hundred years before and few knew of their existence at this time. In Mancos Canyon, Moss pointed out the old cities while Jackson photographed them and for the first time brought them to the attention of the world. The area is now Mesa Verde National Park.

A post office was established at Parrott City in 1875 and the still crude mining camp was named county seat of La Plata County. A sawmill was brought in the following year and the camp finally began to take on the appearance of a town. The first frame house belonged to Moss, and served both as his home and as the headquarters of Parrott Enterprises. Moss installed a barrel of whiskey in one corner, and any visitor was invited to take a dipperful.

When the area began to slip as a mining prospect and the Parrott brothers were looking hard at their investment, Moss tried to keep things moving by building a flume, but it didn't pan out.

"Moss never knew the value of money," grumbled Bill Valliant, who had been brought in to build the flume. "He spent it like water. I still have $700 of this company's bad checks." Valliant characterized Moss as "free-hearted, generous and dissipated. He used to hand out his whiskey by the water-bucketful."

On October 20 Moss married Alida Olson in what was the first wedding ceremony in La Plata County. That same fall, he was elected to the state legislature and traveled to the capital with his new bride. A Denver newspaper described Moss as "convivial, not to say bibulous in habit . . . making himself hail-fellow-well-met with all the men about town. His worst sin was drinking. He kept a big supply on hand at all times and was under its influence much of the time. In Denver, Charlie Leichsenring's saloon held more attraction for him than the assembly."

About two days in the legislature was all Moss could stand. "He took French leave for San Francisco," recalled his wife, "leaving his constituents to look out for their own interests. He did not want the position; said there was not enough money in it. . . ."

Actually, Moss yearned for his freedom. The legislature was like a prison to one who had traveled the Colorado and lived with the Moqui.

MOSS and his wife settled in San Francisco.Their names appear in the local directories from 1878 through 1880. Moss himself continued to prospect and probably maintained some interests in the Colorado River country. He went home to Iowa when his father died in 1878, but he was soon back in San Francisco. A daughter, Lameta Rose, was born on July 4, 1879.

Under the heading, "Died for his brother," a brief San Francisco newspaper article tells all that is known of Moss' death on April 11, 1880. "The well known mining prospector, Captain John Moss, died in this city on Sunday last of a gunshot wound received from an Indian in the southern country. Deceased was familiarly known in all mining camps in the Pacific States, the Territories and Mexico. He was a prominent Mason and received the wound which caused his death while protecting a brother Mason from the assault of the Indian. He came to this city for treatment, the ball having lodged in the lung and suffered through a protracted illness. Deceased was 55 years of age and leaves a wife and child. He will be buried today from the Masonic Temple by Oriental Lodge F. and A. M."

As with much of his life, Moss' death was a mystery. Although he was forty-one years of age when he died, three San Francisco newspapers reported his age as fifty-five, while the Prescott, Arizona *Miner* stated he was fifty-nine.

The *Miner* article paid particular tribute to Moss and his contributions to Southwestern development. "His ramblings are over; his race on earth is run and henceforth other explorers and other frontiersmen will spy out hidden lands and make known to the world the wonders of the Grand Canyon and other unfrequented and difficult places that are in after years to attract millions of curiosity hunters to these western wilds."

Narraguinep would live forever, in legend.

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137 Years Old!

(Continued from page 21)

what year that was he replied that it "was when the post first started." If so, that would have been in 1855. It was after the killing of Captain Stanton by Nana and a band of Apaches near the present site of Mayhill, New Mexico in the Sacramentos, that the government began constructing the fort "to protect the ranchers against the Indians." That any ranchers were in the area is extremely doubtful, but there were farm-

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ers along the little streams flowing from Sierra Blanca.

Other Spanish-Americans also secured employment at Fort Stanton. Simon Sanchez, whose ancestors had migrated directly to the eastern coast of the United States instead of by way of Mexico, was one. Francisco Sais had the equipment for freighting and made regular trips back and forth to Las Vegas, New Mexico to haul supplies for the troops at Stanton; and Simon Sanchez, as soon as he could purchase a wagon and teams, also did freighting.

Simon Sanchez had married Tonita Carabajal, who was ambitious for her husband. Their ultimate goal was a ranch and cattle, and in order to attain that, both worked for wages. Tonita became housekeeper for an officer's wife. They were a very happy couple when they could homestead on a *rancho*—really a *ranchito*—near Arabella, a tiny village north of the Capitans. Tonita continued to earn wages while Simon built an adobe house on their ranch. But there was still a herd to acquire, and they started with sheep. Later Simon bought heifers and eventually owned a good-sized herd of cattle.

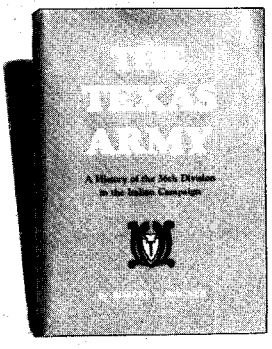
Meanwhile, Francisco was making regular trips to Las Vegas, and as he went out and returned, always spent the night with the Sanchez family. Simon and Tonita were the parents of a large family (all of whom are still living but one).

These were the days when the Apaches made raids on ranches and even on the village of Lincoln itself, where a *torreon* was built to protect its inhabitants. This tower was built of adobe, with an interior stairway leading to the second and third floors. In it supplies of food, water, wood, arms and ammunition were kept. If threatened, the entire population took refuge there, and prepared for defense. How many times this was necessary is not a matter of record; but during the Harrell trouble the torreon was the refuge of the people of Lincoln at least once.

FRANCISCO SAIS was well up in years when his friend Sanchez offered him work and a home on the ranch at Arabella. Despite his age, Francisco was strong, skillful, and efficient—an excellent *vaquero*. Moreover, he was loved by the family and he fitted into it effortlessly.

His ability to talk with the Apaches and his having been on friendly terms with many of them was a protection to the Sanchez family and its herds. And the family never forgot that Francisco, too, was an Indian and that perhaps, like the Apaches, he had an aversion to what he considered woman's work. They never asked menial tasks of him.

He was very expert at butchering, however, and when they needed meat it was always Francisco who secured it. It was noticed that he preferred going after it alone at noon, with a pack horse and tarp, and that he was never gone very long. At that time it was the custom to kill the first fat young animal one found; and Francisco observed that custom. It was only when people began



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The author holds two degrees from The University of Texas and is a former instructor in history at Stephen F. Austin, Nacogdoches, Texas.

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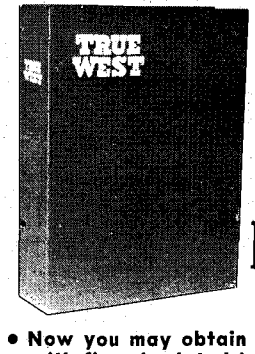

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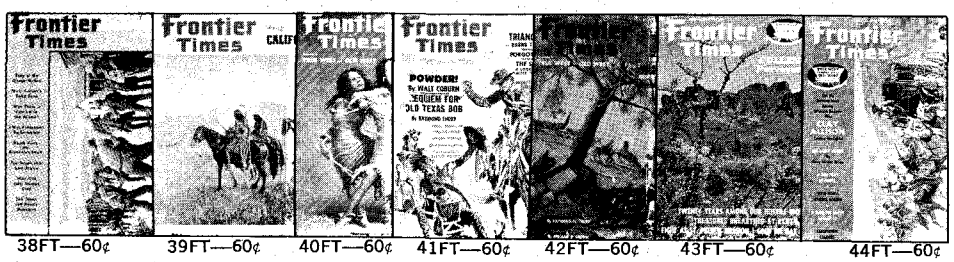

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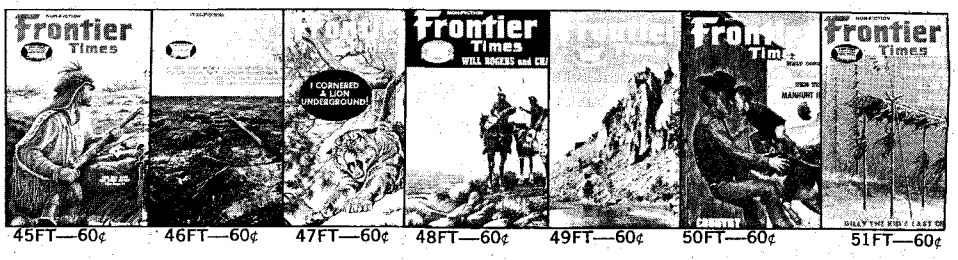

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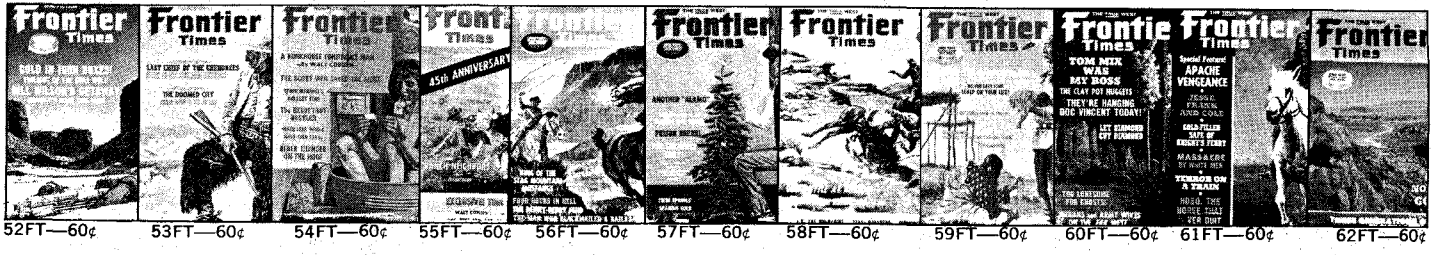

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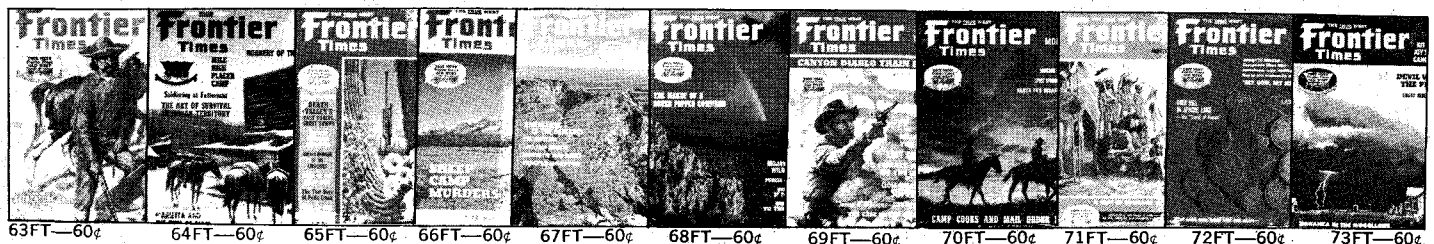

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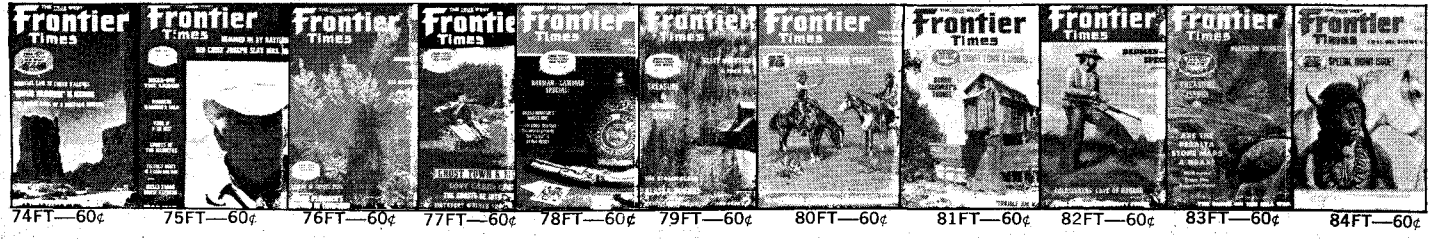

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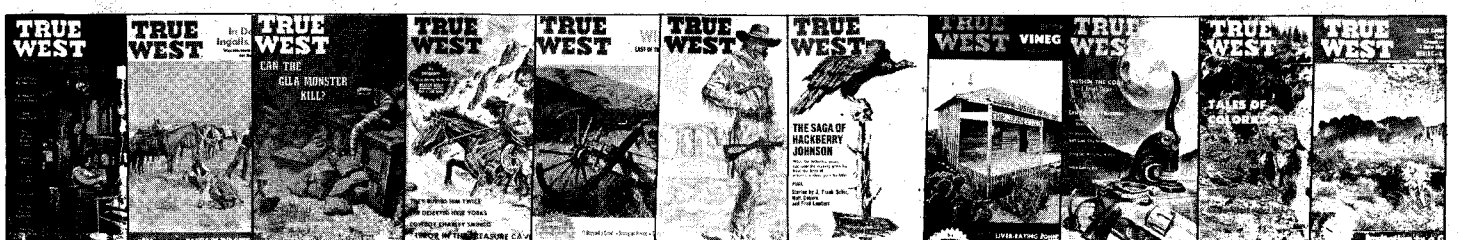

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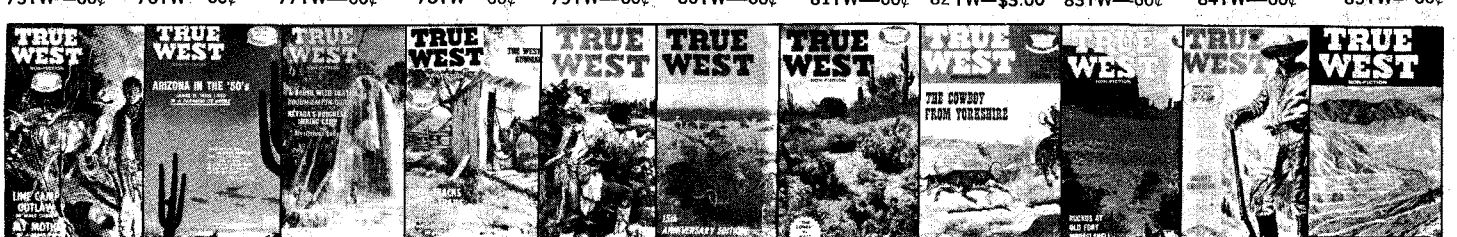

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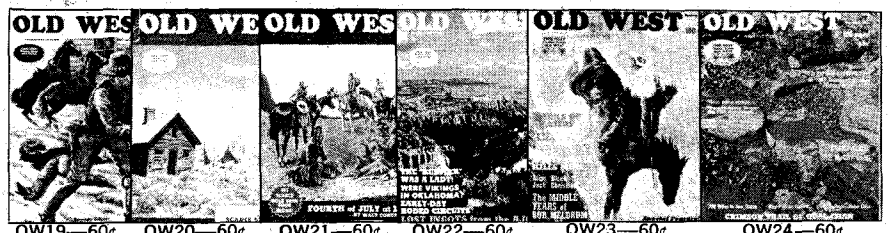

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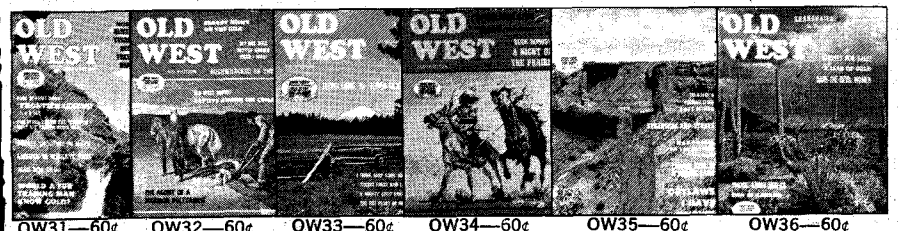

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taking "stray beef" in numbers that it was considered rustling.

Though from his first coming to the ranch Francisco had acted as foreman of the cattle, it was some time before he was given the title. Because he was absolutely honest, loyal, and efficient, and though never talkative was courteous and adaptable, both the family and their neighbors liked and respected him. But eventually the time came when Francisco was unable to continue with so heavy a responsibility. Fortunately for the Sanchez family, he recognized that fact and asked to be relieved of the job.

What, they wondered, would he do? And how unhappy would he be? They need not have worried. When compelled to remain at the house during the day he voluntarily took over the tasks of keeping the water bucket and wood box filled. He began cultivating the garden, and harvesting the vegetables as they became edible. He picked the fruit, and he fed the chickens, milked the cows, and did any chores that were necessary. And if he felt that the work was beneath his dignity he never indicated it. Often when Tonita remonstrated with him for over-working, he just smiled and said it made him happy to be busy. Had he been their elderly relative rather than a friend, they could not have made him more welcome.

One thing of which they still speak with pride was his immaculate cleanliness. And they marveled at his ability to adjust to the changes that occurred during his long life. Fortunately, his advanced age never handicapped him mentally, and any physical change was hardly perceptible.

When Tonita's health necessitated her moving to Roswell where she could be near a doctor, she and her husband asked Francisco to accompany them. No, he said, he would stay and look after the ranch. The children were all grown and married, and somebody was needed at Arabella. It worked out for a while, but in time Francisco realized that his being there alone was a source of worry to the family. So he accepted the invitation of Simon's son Max and his wife to share their home in the canyon of the Ruidoso.

It was there that, after what could hardly be called an illness, Francisco died. He was not sick, he said, but tired. With little or no suffering, he gradually grew weaker until he ceased to live. And the Sanchez family buried the venerable Navajo in their plot in the little cemetery at Arabella.

Outwitting the Daltons

(Continued from page 13)

Seay, in Guthrie, had reached out over the country to appoint responsible persons to handle the opening. He appointed Workman, a Stillwater lawyer, to be probate judge, and Charles F. Gorton of Norman to be sheriff of the new settlement. Workman's job included receiving the money which settlers paid for filing on a claim.

Workman went to Taloga, set up a tent that was to be his place of business,

(Continued on page 60)

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WESTERN BOOK ROUNDUP

By The Old Bookaroos

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BURIED TREASURE—LOST MINES!

The fascination of lost treasures never lessens. Neither does the willingness of authors to write about them. *Treasure-Bonanzas Worth a Billion Bucks* (The Naylor Company, $8.95) by Xanthus Carson is a rambling account of twenty-four lost treasures in Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona. Carson has industriously dug into the lore and literature of lost treasures, and his stories add details and new interpretations to several of the long established legends. He contributes a few mysteries of his own located near Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he lives and writes. In his foreword Carson states that the purpose of his book "is to assist the prospector, the treasure hunter, and the fortune seeker in the location of lost bonanzas, as well as to provide pleasureable reading. . . ." His directions for finding these treasures sound no more convincing than those we have read before, but he does tell a good story.

In *Somewhere Out There—Arizona's Lost Mines and Treasures* (The Prickly Pear Press, $3.70 by mail), Kearney Egerton takes a more light-hearted view of searching for lost treasures. With tongue-in-cheek Egerton states, "A collection of lost mines is one of the nicest things a state can have. Everything about lost mines is good. Nothing is bad. They do not pollute the atmosphere with columns of acrid smoke. They do not befoul the streams. They no not forever scar the delicate desert hillsides with tailings. They have reality. They are real as a rainbow's end over a canyon. . . . The true believers know they exist. Lost mines are The Real Truth, which is not the same as dusty, documented fact in the Bureau of Mines." Then in twenty-three stories he tells the history and legends of Arizona's lost mines and vanished treasure. Each account has a map that locates such bonanzas as the Lost Pick Mine, the Tonto Quartz, the Monterrey Loot, the Silver at Pish-La-Ki, and the Lost Adams Diggings. This is good reading at a bargain price.

POTOMAC CORRAL

A Brief History and the Membership Roster, 1974-1975 Season (The Potomac Corral of the Westerners, P. O. Box 6006, Arlington, Va. 22206, $2.50) may be purchased directly from the Corral. A special feature of this booklet is a listing of the speakers and their subjects 1955-1974, compiled by Colonel William Gardner Bell, military historian and former Sheriff of the Corral. Colonel Bell also contributed "Wild and Woolly West on the Potomac"—a history of the Corral and its activities.

GAMBLIN'

Big Julie of Vegas (Walker and Co., $7.95) by Edward Linn is a fascinating book about gambling, the high rollers for whom the casinos were really built, and Big Julie Weintramb who plays a major role in getting it all together. Big Julie, known as the "Pied Piper of Las Vegas," popularized the all-expense-paid gambling junkets from New York to Vegas, and served as house mother to the groups making the trips. But don't get your hopes up unless you are rich, have unlimited credit, and can drop a minimum of $25,000 per trip, just for kicks. If you do meet the criteria, you will receive VIP treatment all the way, get choice seats at all top shows without standing in line, and when the run craps out, enjoy babes and booze to revive your spirits for another go at the tables. Edward Linn, known for the best sellers *Veeck-As in Wreck* and *The Adversaries*, reveals much about the psychology of gambling, the infrequent but unmatched thrill of the power of winning, and the gambling lure of modern days which like the lure of gold of the Old West, seduces gamblers to return and lose again and again and again.

BLIZZARD!

Environmentalists are prone to write glowingly of April showers, spring flowers and golden harvests. Too often they fail to report the disastrous pranks of nature which may terrorize the population for a few hours or a week. *In All Its Fury, The Story of the January 12, 1888 Blizzard* (Doris Jenkins, 4827 Hillside Ave., Lincoln, Nebraska 68506, $5.35) edited by Ora A. Clement, gives numerous personal accounts of the vicious hell suffered by Great Plainsmen when a cataclysmic blizzard from the Canadian Northwest howled destructively across the American heartland until it blew itself out in the warmer latitudes of the Texas Gulf Coast and the Rio Grande. The personal experiences reported in this book were collected and edited by the Native Sons and Daughters of Nebraska, a group dedicated to preserving important facts about the state's pioneer history. Most of the stories are from Nebraska people who survived the historic January 1888 blizzard but reports from adjoining states also are included. Every single experience reported here was a dramatic event in the lives of people calmly pursuing their normal daily routines when the blizzard struck. The reader can relive with the writers, the unexpected terrors that destructive winds and blinding snowstorms imposed upon them and animals. Panic-stricken parents waited helplessly at home worried about family members lost outside in the swirling blackness of the storm. Hundreds of children were stranded in frigid school shanties. Many lost their lives in the raging storm while searching for friends or relatives. Ranchers lost most of their cattle, and went broke. The Swan Land and Livestock Company lost thousands of cattle on the bleak unprotected Wyoming and Nebraska ranges. Manager Alexander Swan was a financial victim of this tragedy. Published first in 1947, this new edition should find many readers to welcome it.

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN

Indian Women of the Western Morning: Their Life in Early America (Dial Press, $8.95) by John Upton Terrell and Donna M. Terrell reviews the role of the Indian women at the advent of the white man. Many myths are laid to rest and some truth is shed upon the place of women in the family, religion, politics and war. Sex rituals, taboos, marriage and divorce; women as healers, mothers, cooks and craftsmen are subjects explored in this, the twenty-third book by Terrell, not including another twelve for young readers. If one thing comes through it is that the status of and customs relating to women varied greatly by tribes, and that generalization simply is not possible. On the whole, women did enjoy a higher social stature than most legends and myths portray, and often were advisors, medicine people, if not actual matriarchs. The book covers a lot of ground without much detail; it is not overloaded with lengthy, scholarly rationales of why things were the way they were; it is simply informative and enjoyable.

PICTORIAL NEW MEXICO

Enchanted Land—New Mexico (Bank Securities, Inc., $10.00) with photography by Harry Caplin and descriptions by Ruth Armstrong, consists of 143 pages of excellent black and white photographs which illustrate the rich character of New Mexico. Published in collaboration with Calvin Horn, the book ranges through the contrasts of plateaus, meadows, deserts, valleys, snow-capped peaks —Indian, Spanish, and contemporary inhabitants—and across time from the ancient to the modern. Some of Caplin's photos are reminiscent of Erwin Smith and some of Ansel Adams. In Ruth Armstrong's words, "In color New Mexico challenges the eye. In black and white it dares the mind to grasp it." The black and whites do full justice to the New Mexico landscape, her people, history, and development.

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and very soon noticed that there were some men among the new settlers who could be no other than the Dalton gang. Their favorite hideout between jobs was at Cushing, near Stillwater, and Workman knew them by sight.

Perhaps Gorton hadn't arrived on the scene or there may have been some doubt in Workman's mind about the discretion of his co-workers—at any rate he told no one that the Dalton gang was in town, under assumed names. There had been trouble with robbery at other such openings, so as the money accumulated Workman divided it among men of proven character and said nothing about the individuals he most doubted. It wasn't likely that the Daltons wanted to acquire a farm for the sake of farming, since the family holdings they left to become outlaws were close by. But you could never tell.

AT the end of two weeks there was so much money on hand, Workman decided it must be taken to a bank. He gathered it up, mounted his big black horse Lou, and rode toward Stillwater, alone. He believed, or at least hoped, that no one had seen him leave Taloga. The town was at the northern end of the Cross Timbers, a barrier of tangled scrub oak and brush that had made traveling difficult since the earliest wagon-freighting days. Although trails had been cut, the brush seemed to grow back overnight, and the soil was deep sand, tiring to any horse.

Lou was as strong as they came, but after some thirty miles Workman stopped at Cantonment on the North Canadian River, for food and rest for both of them. When he came out of the store that the Mennonites had set up in some abandoned army buildings the Dalton gang was waiting for him. So he hadn't got away from Taloga unseen after all!

They were still keeping their identity under cover, though, and did nothing to provoke a fight. Later developments indicated that the Daltons were opposed to murder, unless as a last resort.

Thus the game began. They pretended to be merely helpful fellow travelers who could point out a good trail for him, and Workman pretended that he had no idea they would overtake him on that trail and rob him. They had their little secret about knowing when he left Taloga with the money, and he had his little secret about his knowledge of their intentions.

The outlaws remained behind while Workman rode away on the trail they had recommended. He didn't follow that trail but a short distance, however. There were wooded canyons reaching down to the North Canadian River where the old army post had stood, and as soon as Workman crossed the river and was well out of sight of the post, he turned aside into one of the canyons. It was the last he saw of the trail for almost twenty miles, a long way to scramble among brush and rocks.

Workman had left home to be a cowboy in his early teens and his years of riding the range had made him an expert horseman. He rode lightly, and he rode a fine horse. Lou carried him swiftly wherever he guided her.

After some miles Workman turned cautiously toward the trail that the outlaws had drawn for him. By this time, he thought, they would have followed, and probably were expecting to overtake their victim most any time. When he sighted them they were stopped, standing in a group and apparently discussing the situation. They were wondering, he knew, if they had been outwitted at the Mennonite store.

AFTER a bit the gang rode on swiftly, and so did Workman but keeping a sharp lookout toward the trail ahead. Then he came to a road that ran at right angles to the one he was traveling.

Suddenly Workman saw one of the outlaws turning back. Knowing he would be followed if he retreated along the trail he was on, Workman made up his mind to take the one that branched from it. He hurried forward and was hidden when his pursuer dashed by. After some moments the outlaw returned, riding toward the big trail and his fellows.

Workman continued east, edging close to the main trail once in a while, and sometimes seeing the Daltons still apparently hoping to overtake him. Finally he got to the area of Okeene, a safe place to ford the Cimarron River. The treachery of the Cimarron made it advisable for Workman to cross there rather than trying to pick his way among the quicksands at some other point, yet there was a hazard connected with a small bluff that overlooked the crossing. The outlaws would surely guess that he would choose the Okeene ford at that point and if he were behind them they could catch him there.

While the beleagured attorney was still trying to decide what to do, a wagonload of hunters started across the river. Workman immediately took his place on the left side of the wagon where he was sheltered from the bluff. The Daltons were indeed lying in wait, and when they sighted Workman, Bob leveled a gun at him but others of the group around Bob knocked it down. Evidently they still hoped to get the money without murder. Bob threw down his hat and stamped angrily on it.

The trail which the gang had outlined for Workman at Cantonment was the Strip Trail, so called because it followed closely along the southern edge of the Cherokee Strip which hadn't yet been opened for settlement. From this point it would be more difficult to follow it without being seen. The country was smoothly rolling and almost without trees or brush. If he were hidden from sight a few moments it would be only a few, and Stillwater was still seventy miles away.

It was nearing night, but Workman kept on until he sighted a light in a settler's house, and rested there a few hours. It was never known where the Daltons spent that night, although there were some caves along the north side of the Cimarron west of Okeene which were outlaw hideouts. The Daltons probably knew about them, and may have used them on this occasion. At any rate, counting on their quarry having an almost useless horse, they waited too long before starting after him.

Workman *was* riding a tired horse by then, or at least riding one which, if ordinary, would have been very tired; Lou, however, was no ordinary horse. The rest of the story is really hers. Her job was to cover the miles and she did so with dispatch. She and Workman reached Stillwater with the money, and way ahead of the Daltons.

When Bob Dalton heard about Workman's arrival time in Stillwater, the bandit observed sourly that no man could ride a horse that far that quickly. It would die.

Lou lived, though, and while Workman was putting the money in the bank for safekeeping, the outlaws, outwitted again and outridden, went on to Wharton and held up a train. They killed one station agent in the process, and when a deputy marshal tried to overtake them they killed him too.

Workman was in his second-story office, catching up on business when the deputy's body was brought to the undertaker's establishment across the street. Looking down through his office window, the lawyer must have mused, "Workman, it just wasn't your time."

A newspaper item of 1895 told of his being a delegate to a Knights of Pythias convention, and a later one reported his nomination for county attorney. A published statement of one of his backers declared that he was a man of good judgment, which he certainly was, as well as a person with a large amount of cour-

Cantonment, located on the North Canadian River, where Workman stopped for food and rest on the way to Stillwater.

Courtesy Western History Collections; University of Oklahoma Library, Campbell Collection

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age. After his term as county attorney Workman went on to earn other legal honors, but he never tried to capitalize on his desperate ride from Taloga.

Getting Acquainted with Mules

(Continued from page 26)

ON Christmas Day of 1925 a group of men were gathered around the feed-barn and wanted something exciting to do. One man was a friend of mine who owned a draying outfit. His name was Joe Shepherd. Joe was an excellent horseman. He always drove good horses to the dray. He often said he had never seen the horse he could not teach something, and suggested we hitch the little mules to his dray outfit and he would drive them.

We harnessed the mules while some of the fellows placed the sleigh facing the barn door. We had plenty of help to hitch those squirmy mules while Joe handled his lines.

When they were turned free they circled away from that barn door as fast as they could go. Half a dozen men had piled onto the flat-bottomed sleigh as it turned away. We could see Joe with his feet braced against the front, leaning back on the lines with all his might. It looked as though that sleigh were being pulled along by the lines instead of the harness traces. Each time the mules made a circle and came back, more of us would pile on. Soon there were nearly twenty men on the sleigh, but the little mules galloped just the same. We went up one street and down another until we had covered the town. News of our Christmas parade soon drifted far, and there was no one looking to buy mules at the sale barn!

When it was past mid-winter, those mules were still owned by Gunter's Livery. Then one day Seth's brother-in-law, Ted Wells, rode into town. He looked Jim and Jack over carefully and thought they would make a great driving team for him while the snow was deep. Ted traded his old pony for the mules.

Ted was my neighbor in the ValMarie district. He was single and always liked a good time. Far-off points would seem closer now that he had a driving team that would travel. But Ted had a bad time with his mules. Someone always had to come help him hitch them. Ted would often travel all day; then maybe for a week or more he couldn't go anyplace because he couldn't get the mules hitched.

After Jim and Jack became known in our district, we learned of several other people who had owned them for a short time. One fellow told me he had them for a couple of weeks, and during that time had never been able to take their harness off.

One morning in the spring, Ted came to my place and said, "Those doggone mules—I don't know what I'm going to do with them! The big one won't stay inside my fence, and there's nothing I dare hitch them to but my big wagon. No one will ride with me anymore, either. What do you have around here you would trade for a nice team of sound mules?"

That day I had a small bronco tied in the stable. It was too small for a work horse, and its build was far too awkward for a saddle horse. It also acted ornery when I took it out for water.

Ted looked at my trading horse and said, "Curly, if that knot-head will stay in a fence, I'll trade my team for him." Before he left that day I owned the mules.

But the deal wasn't quite finished. Ted said, "I'm rid of those doggone mules now, but I haven't a bit of use for this horse. What will you trade me for it?" So I bought my trading-horse back again for $20—only now I was stuck with Jim and Jack.

Ted and I took them out to my place. I put good halters on them and tied them in a double horse stall in the stable. A single stall would have easily held both; Jack weighted 810 pounds and Jim only 780.

I thought about some plowing I had to do sometime that month, and decided that by using a little horse-science on them perhaps I could gentle them enough to do the job. They looked so small beside a horse I thought they would need to be fed for awhile to give them enough strength to work in the field.

JACK had shown himself to be a notorious kicker with Ted, but I personally had not learned anything about either one, yet.

When it came time to feed them, that

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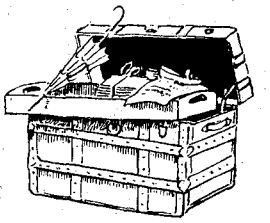

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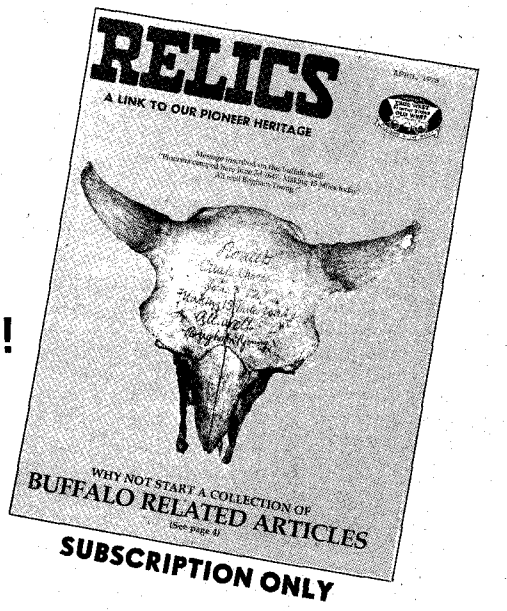

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little Jim would hop around like a flea in a mitten. I knew I'd better watch that fellow and for a week I packed the oat sheaves in beside Jack. Then one day Ted came along when I was feeding and saw me go in beside the big mule with the sheaves. "Curly," he said, "for Lord's sake, that big mule will kill you! I wouldn't walk in beside him for a thousand dollars!"

I looked at Ted for a second or two, then I said, "Ted, if *that* mule would kill me what would the other one do to me?"

He said, "Jim is gentle. He'll jump around a lot, but he won't hurt you." So I didn't know, then, what to think.

Standing in the stable for several days at a time was not good for this team. When I'd lead them out for water they would try to get away from me. They would swing apart, and pull back, until I had to let Jack go. But one day I fooled them on that trick. I tied their halter ropes together—and watched them pull at each other!

During the nice spring days I handled them separately, and they became much better acquainted with me. We had always done a fair amount of horsebreaking at the ranch, and kept one horse which was a special bronco-buster. We called him Larry. He was gentle and well mannered, and could travel fast if it was necessary. He would always stop when asked, and everything else had to stop with him. We could climb over his back or under his belly to work with an unruly horse. Larry was a bronco-buster until he was twenty years old.

The first time I hitched one of the mules was to plow my dad's garden that spring. I harnessed Jack and anchored him to Larry. I also had a stout rope from the mule to another steady horse.

When they were all hitched to the plow I soon found out how high that mule could kick. He looked so small between the horses he resembled a big dog but before that plow had been moved one rod away we had a real exhibition. Jack kicked out of his own traces and into the traces of the horses beside him. He almost kicked his feet back over my lines. He would jump back as far as those two ropes would allow him to go, and kick at the plow. Before this performance stopped, I was standing on the plow seat holding my lines above my head. Finally we got things moving, and we got the garden plowed.

Each mule had been worked separately until one day I put them together for a lead team on the plow. Without Larry to hold them for me, did we ever do some plowing for a while! In less than fifteen minutes I had far more appropriate names for them than they'd ever been given before. They had run away with my plow while stuck in the ground. They left the plowed furrows and ran toward the prairie that was very stony ground. Somehow I managed to swing them enough to get them on the stubble field, and eventually back to the plowed land. Ted had told me, "Those mules will hurt you every time they get the chance," and now I began to believe every word he had said.

Well, I worked the mules, and got the plowing done. If one day went by when they didn't work I was sure to have to blindfold them the next day to get them hitched. The Gunter boys were learning something about Missouri River mules. All those little creatures had ever learned to do was run.

They were turned into the pasture with other horses most of the summer. Jack would crawl under the fence and get into the grain crop every day. Anytime I would shout at him he would scamper for the fence and go under it at high speed, similar to the antelope. Such antics would make me think of the long life span of a mule and what I'd have to go through before they died of old age.

But one day that fall a man came looking for a mule team. This was in the fall of 1926. T. B. Long, who had managed the 76 Ranch had remembered the little mules and how they could run. He wanted to drive them on a sleigh to haul his coyote-hounds that winter. Coyote hunting was a special sport in those days with some folks. T. B. thought the mules had gained in flesh since their life on the 76. (He didn't know that Jack had spent a summer in our grain fields!) "Curly," he said, I'll give you a pair of young mares for the mules. They are not halter-broke and they may be in foal. You can come pick them up at round-up time." I was overjoyed. We corralled the mules and I put their halters and small collars on them, and soon they were being led away toward the Long Ranch, about twenty miles southeast of our place.

In less than three days the biggest mule was back. There were no fences in that twenty miles that could make him detour. We got word to Mr. Long, and inside of a week his son Wayne came for Jack.

When Wayne left, he rode as straight as the crow would fly toward home. Three miles southeast of our place he had to cross a branch of the Snake Creek. It was about eight feet deep there, and some fifteen feet wide at the top. The creek was dry and a cow-path angled down one side to the bottom then angled up the opposite side.

When Wayne and his pony were in the bottom, the mule was still on the top with one ear cocked ahead. Then as soon as Wayne rode up the path on the far bank and was near the top, Jack heaved back with all his mule power. He tipped Wayne and his saddle horse upside down into the creek bottom. The rope dallies came off Wayne's horn, and Jack was loose. I imagine that mule really hee-hawed at what he could see in the creek bed!

In a short time Jack was back home. Wayne was badly bruised, and his saddle horse was very lame. They climbed out of that dry creek bed and limped back three miles to our house. We looked Wayne over good and put some horse liniment on his sore spots. The next day we lent him a saddle horse to take the mule home. Wayne's pony recovered in a week or two.

I think that was the first time I saw Jim or Jack. I often wondered, though, how a coyote hunter could stop the mules long enough to pick up his fur catch. Also how do you think a pack of hounds would enjoy their ride, locked up in a dog box and scooting over the hills a mile a minute through the snow?

There was one time that I got badly tangled up in a rope, with one end of it on Jack's neck and two men holding the other. The mule would not go out through an open gate, and I undertook to lead him through. When I got him past that gate he spun around me like a flash, intending to get away before I could take the rope off his neck. That mule went behind me and around me—and two men pulling on the rope, it pitched me underneath him. He tried to kick me to pieces that time; his heels tapped all over me before I could get out of that rope tangle. When I was back on my feet Ted's words seemed to ring in my ears, "That doggone mule could kill you."

Truly Western

(*Continued from page 20*)

he contact the magazine and give his address.

We would like to know who this strange man is. What is his story? Any man who rides those deserts alone certainly must be rawhide tough and he looked like he was.—Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Newby, 514 4th Street, Broderick, California 95605

Editor's note: It has been over two years since Blackie wrote us, giving no address for a reply, and we received no response to that notice referred to in the Newbys' letter. Maybe he, too, will pick up that back issue or this magazine and get in touch with us.

Early Fort Gibson Marshal

Your story about Cherokee Bill's brother in the October 1974 issue prompted me to write because my father, George W. Perry, was the first city marshal of Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. I believe he came there about 1897 or 1898 from Arkansas where he was some kind of marshal at Fort Smith and Van Buren.

He was at Fort Gibson at the time the Crittenden brothers were killed, and I have a picture of them taken after their death. I was born there in 1904, but my father died in Texas in 1909, so I was too small to remember much about Fort Gibson. I have a postcard written to my father by Mr. John Byrd, picturing his drug store. It's the J. M. Pierce Building that you show in your article. There is a rock by the telephone post in the picture I have, and Mr. Byrd wrote on the card, "Perry Rock," beside it. When I went to Fort Gibson about seven years ago, the rock was still there. I still have a picture of Sonny and Beatrice Byrd who were about my age.

There are a few small things I can remember about living there. I recall the old Terry Hotel and Mr. Dick Gibson buying our place when we left. I remember my father being in a search for a man who killed two men camping out somewhere near Fort Gibson. The killer

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hid the bedding along the road behind bushes and logs, and hid the bodies. He wandered around in the hills and mountains in the wagon he had stolen, and they caught him.

My father was six feet three inches tall, weighed over 200 pounds and wore a moustache. One of the horses he rode was called Charlie. He was shot in the chest near Van Buren, Arkansas while hunting an outlaw, and the U. S. Marshal just ahead of him was killed. This shotgun wound eventually caused my father's death several years later. I've always wished I knew more about him and Fort Gibson at that time.—Mrs. Roy (Dorothy) Haile, Route 1, Hawley, Texas 79525

The Okanogan Country

I've just ordered more copies of the October '74 TRUE WEST from the drugstore because of an article, "Magic in the Okanogan," by J. A. Haag. I went to the same school with him and his brothers and sisters and am in the school picture. It would be so good to be in touch with them again, and to find out about the family after all these years.—Effie Brown, P. O. Box 383, Tonasket, Washington 98855

☆ ☆ ☆

I have just read your magazine TRUE WEST for the first time and I enjoyed everything in the October issue. I especially liked "Magic in the Okanogan" because my folks often visited friends there when I was a child. Corkscrew Mountain is a familiar sight for me as is Toroda Creek Valley. I also remember most of the group pictured on page 19. I wish I could relive those happy years again!—Mrs. Thomas Gerard, 7409 E. Marietta, Spokane, Washington 99206

☆ ☆ ☆

The story by J. A. Haag brought back many memories. My brother and I made whistles using some other tree than willow, and we made all our other playthings as well. We even sawed wagon wheels out of pine trees.

In another article, someone mentioned a madstone that her father and mother took out of a cow's stomach. We always heard that a madstone had to come from only one kind of deer. My dad had one and I have one that I got in the northern part of California, and it is beautiful. Back in the past they believed that if you put the wound in milk, and then bound the madstone on it, you wouldn't go mad from a mad dog's bite.—Mrs. Calvin Black, Possum Trot, P. O. Box 91, Yermo, California 92398

"Old-timer" Howard Hilton

While reading the December '74 TRUE WEST, I came across a picture of Howard Hilton on page 21. About 1927 or '28, I was vacationing in Cayucos on the coast where Howard Hilton was running a deep sea fishing boat. I had been on those boats several times before and always got seasick, but I thought I would try it again. Howard had quite a large number of fishermen on board that early morning, and we put out for the fishing grounds, full of enthusiasm and good humor.

Because the fishing deck was rather crowded, Howard Dormandy, an acquaintance of mine, took a stand forward of the cockpit house and met the spray head on. The weather was fine—not a cloud in the sky, and the temperature mild—but soon Dormandy and I were well wetted down. When the boat stopped and we began to bait our lines old *mal de mer* hit me under the belt as usual. The boat rolled with the Pacific swell and I grew sicker and sicker. Had thought that with repeated attempts I would gain my sea legs, but being well wetted down, I got worse than ever. Mr. Hilton suggested that I go down in the hold near the engine and warm up.

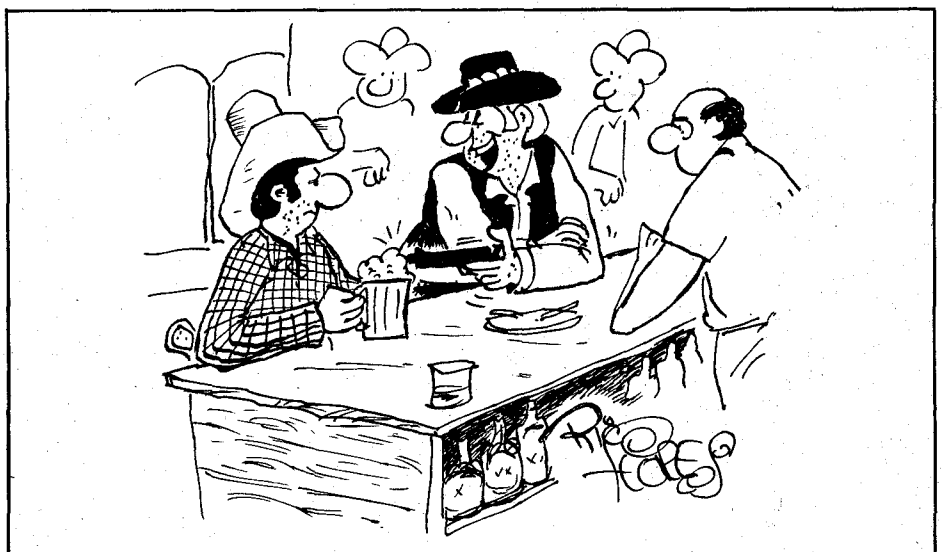
There must have been a leak of carbon monoxide or something from the engine. I could smell the fumes of burned gasoline or whatever fuel he was using. When I arrived, there was another sick man, heaving into a galvanized water pail. He saw my condition and graciously surrendered the seat to me and I began adding to the contents of the bucket. The boat gave a roll to port and I toppled head-first into the bucket, turning it over and spilling the contents on the floor and on the other man's feet.

He mounted the stairs for the deck, and I followed. Just as I got my head out of the hold I passed out completely. When I regained consciousness they were pouring sea water in my face to bring me to. Howard Hilton later told me he was sure I was going to die.

At this point the boat was headed for shore. I had told the men I would pay every man's fare if they would take me in so they could go back out. They agreed, but Mr. Hilton would not charge an extra fare.

Besides myself, four other men decided they had all the deep sea fishing they cared for, and assisting me up the ladder to the floor of the pier, they left the dock with me. I had to be helped to reach the tent where my family was camping, and was put to bed for a day.

At that time Mr. Hilton lived just four and one-half miles east of my home. He came home every week or so, and a few days after my trip with him he brought me a nice 3½ pound Rock Cod. By that time I was fish hungry, and enjoyed the treat very much. He congratulated me on surviving. That was my last trip on the ocean as an alleged fisherman. I could never understand why, when others were able to survive a trip or two and become immune to seasickness, I could never cut the mustard.—Leon (Buck) Dial, 250 Smith Avenue, Dinuba, California 93618



"You look like the type of fella that would buy an unemployed gunslinger a drink. Right?!"

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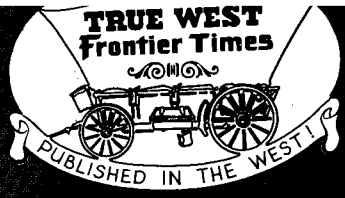

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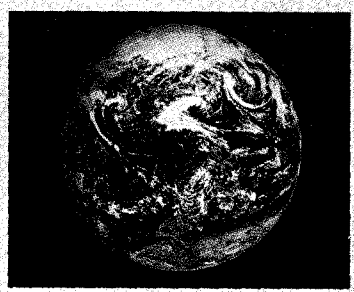

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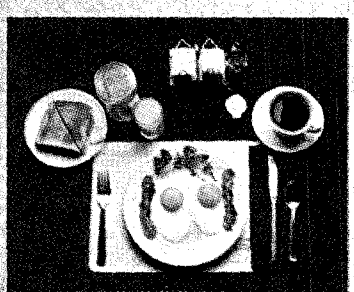

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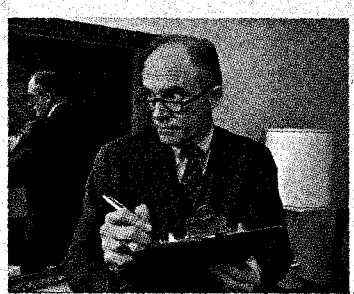

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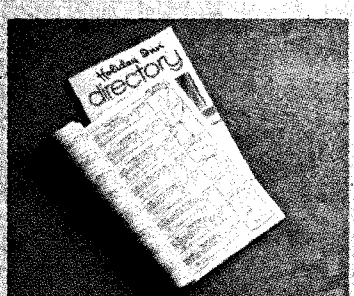

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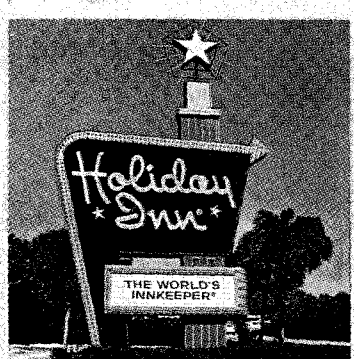

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